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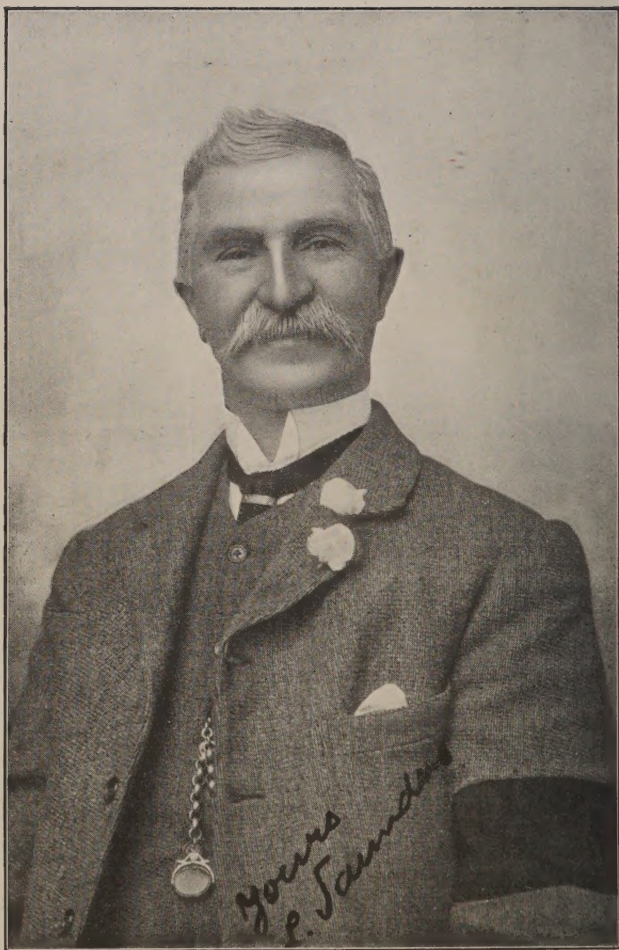
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HINDLEY BLACKPOOL,

LANCASHIRE HUMOUR AND PATHOS.

By LANGFORD SAUNDERS.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

SAM FITTON (*Cartoonist*).



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This Book is
Dedicated to the memory of
WILLIAM BIRCH BROADHEAD

(OBIT. MARCH 3RD, 1907.)



ELDEST SON OF
WM. HY. BROADHEAD, J.P., & MRS. BROADHEAD
(MAYOR & MAYORESS OF BLACKPOOL, 1906 & 1911).

He was a liberal Patron of the Arts,
A Benefactor to the Poor,

AND A SINCERE FRIEND OF

The Author.

PREFACE.

I SHOULD not have deemed it necessary to apologise for, or explain why I have written, this book in the Lancashire dialect, but I read a summary of a speech delivered to the scholars at a Bury school, at a prize-giving on Nov. 3rd, 1910, by Mr. George Harwood, M.A., the distinguished member of Parliament for Bolton. He is reported to have counselled his hearers to discard the use of the dialect because it was "ugly, ungrammatical, un-English, absolutely incorrect. . . . Pronouns all wrong, verbs all wrong, and the whole thing upside down. There was an English language that had been developed by hundreds of years of culture and education, and why should it be so mutilated and so disgracefully used as it was by Lancashire people?"

That is a strong indictment against a dialect that was protoplast of the English language—a dialect used by our forbears in their wooings and in transacting business; a tongue which probably most of the mothers of the boys whom Mr. Harwood was addressing used when soothing their offspring to sleep. Ugly! I deny it. Ungrammatical I admit; but inasmuch as it was a language long before a grammar was compiled, Lancashire folk never required the aid of such rules to enable one to understand another. Will Mr. Harwood give us examples of where the pronouns and verbs are all wrong; and also tell us how anything in use can be "upside down."

The builders of the "beautiful" English language appear to me to have been indifferent craftsmen, considering they have compiled over three million words, and there are very few of our best scholars who are familiar with a thousandth part of them. The Lancashire dialect comprises less than five hundred words, and those who converse in it know its whole dictionary, and furthermore, have made colossal fortunes for those who would condemn it. Is it not ungenerous, to say the least, to criticise the roughness of the timbers of the bridge over which one has crossed to the land of wealth? I am tempted to write much more had I the space.

I gratefully acknowledge the encouragement I have received in the production of this book from the Lancashire Authors' Association (to which I have the honour to belong), and must specially thank Mr. Jos. Cronshaw and Mr. Sam Fitton (both authors of repute) for their assistance as critics and "readers" of the contents herein. I must thank Mr. Sam Fitton, also, for the illustrations; he has interpreted my ideas very intelligently, and my readers will judge their merit.

Blackpool, February, 1911.

THE AUTHOR.

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APRIL FOO-DAY.

WHEN I were a lad April Foo-day were reckoned as mich on as Tracle-cake Day or Poncake Tuesday. We had to think on it comin' weeks afore t' time, an' if we happened t' forget it when we wakkend on April fust ten to one eaur faythers an' mothers ud mak a foo on us, an' then lowf. An' we had to keep it i' mind aw day, for every lad one met tried to trap yo', an' if yo' happened to remember it, an' he couldn't foo yo', if he were th' bigger lad he'd cop yo' one i'th' yer-hole.

At th' Sunday Skoo as I went to th' doobby as cleond th' skoo an' kept us i' order—wi' a cane—while th' skoo oppent were named Skinner—Ham Skinner. He were a lung, thin chap, an' his wife, wot helped him, were very fat, an' puffed a lot when hoo were warkin', so th' lads cawd her Bacon. an' hoo soon geet to be cawd Fat Bacon.

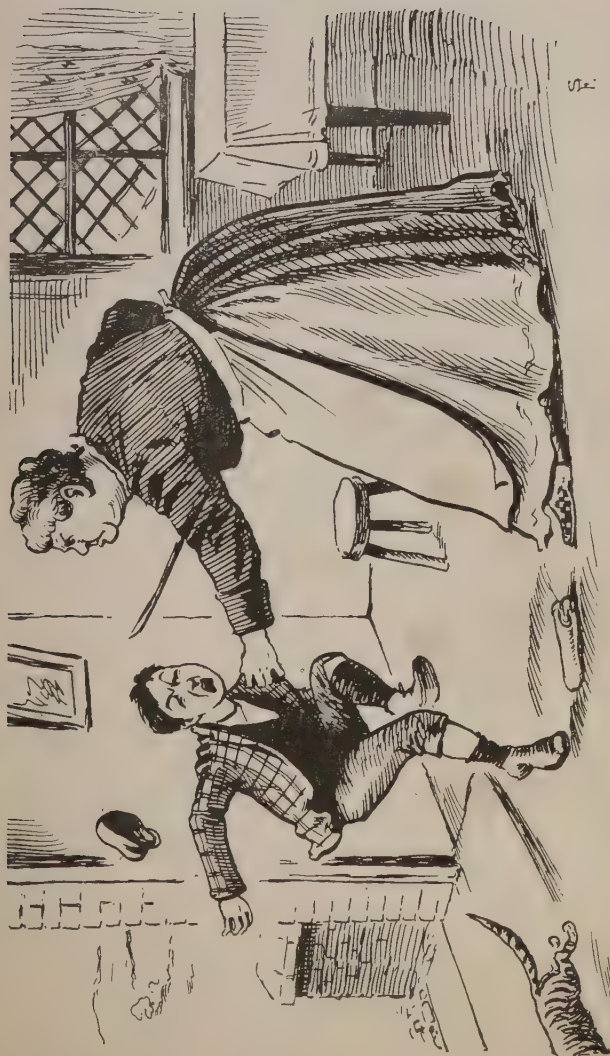
Well, one Foo-day—I'd forgotten it were Foo-day—eaur Bess, my owdest sister, says to me, "Jack, I want thee to goo to Skinner's, an' ax Mrs. Skinner for that peaund o' fat bacon I left theer last neet. Be sharp, neaw, for I want it to put i'th' beef-steak pie as I'm makkin' for th' dinner. An here's a aniseed drop for thee."

Neaw, if there were owt i'th' chewin' line as I were fond on it were beef-steak pie, an I were so pieosed to know we were havin' it for dinner ut I galloped off,

like a gobbin, thinkin' nowt wrung, an' knockt at Skinner's dur. Mrs. Skinner ansert it. I said, "Eaur Bess has sent me for that peaund o' fat bacon hoo left here last neet." Mrs. Skinner says, "Wait a minute," an' hoo cowft, an' I seed her face goo red. Hoo went i'th' kitchen, an' browt a papper i' one hond, while hoo held t'other behind her. "Here theau art," hoo says, an' pretended t' offer me th' papper, while hoo whizzed her husbond's cane, which were in her other hond behind her, on mi' yed an' showders till, when I think on it neaw, I con feel th' sore places yet. "Theighur," hoo said, "that's fat bacon; goo an' tell yore Bess theau's gotten it." An' when I went whoam cryin' eaur Bess an' my fayther nobbut lowft, an' cawd me a April foo. Nobry else copt me again that day, I con tell yo'.

It were another Foo-day after that as a lot of us lads geet nicely tricked i' tryin' th' gam on, an' Joe Baxter lost a penny through it. It were this road: There were a chap cawd Abram Watson—but he were better known as Owd Abram—kept a shop i' Deansgate, where he sowd everythin' i'th' grocery an' fizzik line. He were a little fat chap, wi' a bawd yed, an' he'd no teeth, so as when he spoke yo' had to be very quiet, or else yo' couldn't tell what he said. He wor a good-tempered chap, wi' a ripplin' smile awlus on his face.

Well, one o'th' lads we played wi' were cawd Tum Smith. He were a quiet lad, an' we aw liked him, for he were awlus willin' t' run a errand for us, or field aw day when we played cricket, an' he were innercent. On this April Foo-day, i'th' afternoon, we were gooin' cricketin', an' Joe Baxter, th' biggest lad among us,



"THEIGHUR" HOO SAID, "THAT'S FAT BACON"

browt his bat an' baw, an' Tum Smith carried th' stumps. We had to pass Owd Abram's shop, an' Joe Baxter stopped us aw afore it, an' pood a little bottle eaut of his pocket, an' a penny, an' said to Tum Smith, "Here, Tum, tak' this bottle an' penny an' goo to Owd Abram's for a pennorth o' pigeon's milk. It's good for rubbin' eaur shins wi' if we gotten hit wi' th' baw." Some on us bethowt eaurselfs then what day it were, an' started lowfin' quietly, but little Tum—poor lad, he deed a while after on th' road to Canada—looked so gawmless, an' thowt it were aw reet as Joe Baxter had sent him. When Tum geet i'th' shop we aw flattened eaur noses agen' th' window, lowfin' like skoolads con lowf, an' Joe Baxter busted two buttons off his wescut wi' jumpin' an' chinkin', thinkin' what foos he wur makin' o' booath Tum an' Owd Abram. But as Tum didn't come flyin' eaut o'th shop, as we aw expected, Joe put his face to th' window, an' his jaw dropped, for he seed Owd Abram tak' th' bottle off Tum, an' Abram said, "Tha wants a pennorth o' pigeon's milk, doesta? Wheer's thy penny?" So Tum gan Abram th' penny, an' he off wi' th' bottle to th' kitchen. In a bit he coom back wi' abeaut a tablespoonful o' milk i'th' bottle, an' he said to Tum, "It's for th' choilt, I reckon. Well, tell thi' mother to soak a piece o' flannel i'th' milk, an' let th' choilt suck it. It'll cure it. An' if there's anny laft tha can have a suck. An' be careful an' durn't spill it, for pigeon milk's very dear."

Yo con gowse heaw we felt when Tum coom eaut o'th' shop wi' th' bottle, an' we could see through th' window Owd Abram doubled up nearly havin' a fit wi' lowfin'. Joe Baxter were mad abeaut that penny,

for he hadn't another, an' when we went on Owd Abram hadn't recovered, an' as Joe seed his merriment he sheauted, "I wish tha'd brasted thyself, owd mon," which I thowt were very wrung, becos Joe were to blame. Anyheaw, it speilt th' day, for Joe were very bad tempered, an' poor little Tum cried hard when he thowt he were th' cause on it.

None on us had th' pluck to try th' gam on again. an' I've never done ony April foolin' sin.

BAITIN' A RAT.

Y'ST never forget it! Jim Parkinson, as kept th' hay an' straw shop, had catcht a big rat—such a whopper it were as he darn't goo near th' trap, for it growled an' barked like a little dug. So he cawd Topper, a chap as worked for him, but Topper were feared on it, too, then he fotechd Jack Bradley, th' butcher, an' Jack browt his fox-terrier dug. When Jack went near th' cage trap th' rat set at him, so he stopped still for a minute. Then he towd Topper an' Parkinson to get a stick a-piece, an' they'd tak th' trap upstairs into th' shop, wheer there were plenty o' reaum, an' they'd bait it wi' th' dug. Jack Bradley teed his hankicher reaund his hond, geet howd o'th' trap, an' they went upstairs to th' shop. Then they shut th' shop dur, an' th' dur as led to th' kitchen. When they'd gotten settled, Jack Bradley said, "Neaw be sure an hit it wi' yor sticks if it dodges th' dug. . . Are yo ready?" They said they were, an' Jack put his foote on th' cage, an' tilted th' lid up, but th' rat didn't oss to come eaut. So Topper went to th' back o't' trap, an' hit it wi' his stick. Then th' rat run

eaut, an' Bradley's terrier went for it, but it missed it. As th' rat run to'rt Parkinson he jumped up, an' comin' deawn tumblet o'er th' dug. He were up sharp enoof, an' made at th' rat wi' his stick, but as Topper were runnin' forrud at th' minute he geet a whack on his napper fro' Jim's stick as knockt him mazy, an' made blood come. Then Bradley, seein' as th' terrier had missed th' rat, which had run under some straw, made a punce at th' straw an' londed his clug on Jim Parkinson's shin. Jim yelled eaut, an' dropt his stick for t' rub his leg. Missis Parkinson, yerrin th' row an' scuffle i'th' shop, coom hurryin eaut o'th' kitchen, an' as hoo oppent th' dur th' rat, seein' a chance to escape, coom fro' under th' straw an' run past her. Hoo seed it, set up a skrike as would ha' freetend a thunder clap, an' fawd deaun in a fit. Then th' dug, seein th' rat gooin, barked an' were after it. Jack Bradley were so mad at th' terrier missin th' rat, that he hit it on th' yed wi' th' stick as Jim Parkinson had dropt. There were such a yelpin as raised th' nayburhood, an' a creawd collected reaund th' shop door in no time. Yerrin th' neise inside th' shop they thowt murder were bein' done, an' sombry foteht a bobby. When he coom he banged at th' dur, an' Jack Bradley oppent it. Th' bobby thowt he'd gotten a good cop (though he wur a bit narvous) when he seed Mrs. Parkinson lyin' on th' flure in a fit, an' Topper sittin' on a bundle uv hay, moanin' hard, an' howdin' his hankicher to his yed, which were bleeding fast; an' then looked at Jim Parkinson, who were groanin an' rubbin' his leg.

"Whooa's done aw this?" he axt Jack Bradley, who were th' only one as wern't hurt.

Jack Bradley were so bewildered he couldn't speik.

"If tha's nowt to say I'st lock thee up, an' charge thee wi' attempted murder."

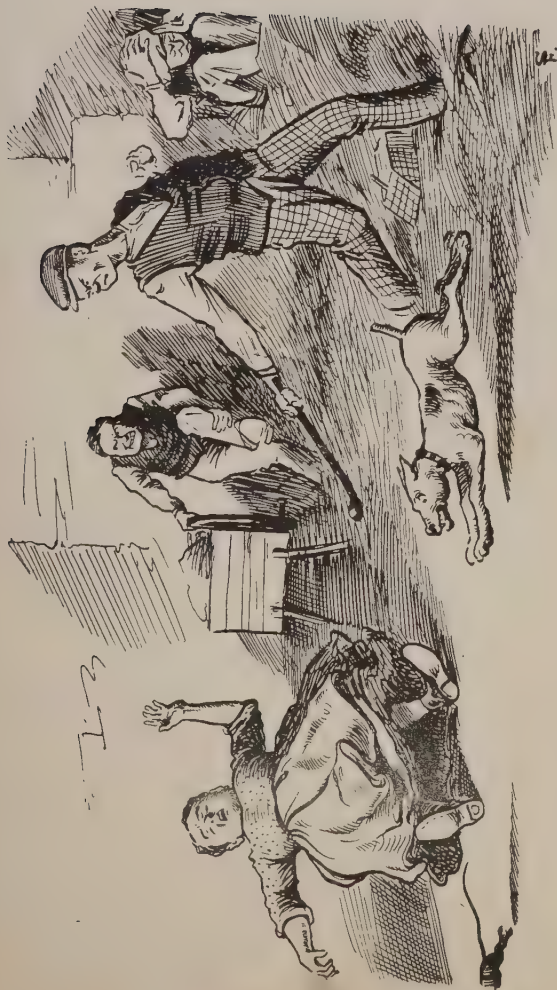
He collared Jack Bradley, an' were makin' off wi' him, when Jim Parkinson, seein' as things were gettin sayrious, pood hissels' together, an' tow'd th' bobby as Jack had done nowt wrung. "We'n nobbut bin baitin' a rat," he said.

Th' bobby, yerrin' Missis Parkinson groanin', just as if she were at th' last gasp, went to her, lifted her up, an' when he geet her reaund, Topper had to be looked after, for his yed were bleeding, an' he were skrikin' like a hooter at a fair. Then th' bobby turned to Jim Parkinson, who were still rubbin' his leg an' pooin' a feaw face. "I think," said th' bobby, an' he looked disgusted, "th' best thing I con do for thee is to send for th' ambulance, an' ha' thi leg tan off."

"Durn't bother, mester," said Parkinson, "I'st be reet in a bit. Thank you, aw't same," an' he limped i th' kitchen. Th' bobby went to th' shop dur to send th' creawd away, an' then bethowt o' summat. He turned back, an' said to Jack Bradley, "Wheer's th' rat yo'n bin batin'?" Jack looked reaund, an' said, surprised-like, "Why, it mun ha' gotten away!"

Th' bobby looked as if he didn't believe it, but he went off. When he'd gotten a bit deawn th' road he stopped still, pood his helmet off, an' scrat his yed. He were thinkin'. In a bit he recollected, an' he said to hissels, "By gow! it is; I've bin had. Yesterday *were t' thirty-fust o' March.*"

He were mad then, an' he set off back as fast as his feet would let him goo. When he geet to Parkinson's shop he shued th' dur open, an' sheauted, "This is a trick. Yo'd best be careful; I'm noan to be had twice."



BAITIN A RAT



HIS DUG "MICK."

IF annybody thinks I'm fond o' drink it's a mistake—for I'm not. Mony a time when I've bin beaut brass, or bin' savin' up for my holidays, I've never touched ale for wicks at a time, an' I could do it again. But I do go i'th' Miller's Arms i' Black-pool sometimes, for I yer mony a quip theer ut's woth tellin'.

Me an' Joe Short were theer t'other neet. Yo' seen we'n a pictur club—Joe's secretary an' I'm treasurer—an' we'd bin canvassin' for customers, so we thowt we'd have a pint apiece after th' neet's wark.

There were nobbut one felly i'th' room when we went in, an', by gum, he were a quare-lookin' customer. He were a little chap, wi' ferrety een, an' his body were on th' twitch aw th' time we were in, as if he'd summat on his mind.

In a bit two farmers wot lived at Marton coom in, and they'd a collie dug wi' um. They'd bin takkin' cattle to Poulton, an wur on th' th' road whoam again. After suppin' an' warmin' theirsels, th' chap as owned th' dug begun o' strokin' it an tawkin' to it, an it looked as if it knowed every word as were said to it.

"That's a good dug yo'n gotten, mester," I said.

"It is that," said he; "it con do owt but talk. Hast' a penny in thi pocket?" he axt.

I tow'd him I had.

"Well," said he, "put it on its nose, an' see what it'll do wi' it."

So I chanced a penny, put it on its nose, when th' dug balanced it, chucked it up i'th' air, an' then copt it in its meawth. Then it walked eaut o'th' room, an' in a bit it coom back wi' a papper bag in its meawth. It put it between its paws on th' flure, tore th' bag oppen, an' theer it had bowt three sugar-covered biscuits wi' th' penny, an' begun eitin' 'um.

"Well, that is clever," said Joe Short; "but it's done it afore."

"Aye, it has," said th' farmer, "th' shopkeepers abeaut here aw know eaur Dan." An' he patted it again.

Then th' little chap wit' ferriety een chipped in. His body had bin twitchin' a lung while, an' his little een twinkled an' twitched like his body.

"I'd a clever dug once," he said, "an' it were a rip."

"Well, tell us abeaut it," said Dan's mester.

"Well, I am doin'. I fun it wanderin' abeaut th' street when it were a whelp, ragged an' rough-haired, wi' only hawf a tail. It were a Irish terrier. When I took it whoam th' wife an' eaur Selina (she's eaur only choilt) took pity on th' poor thing, an' they geet to like it. But I mony a time wished I'd never seen it, for it caused me mony a fret, an' made me so narvous I'st never get o'er it. It were awlus feightin', an I were never eaut o' trouble. It would tackle any dug it met, an' after sendin' th' licked dug yelpin' deaun th' street it would come an' sit on its haunches at my feet, an' wi' one yer cocked up an' its yedjon one



HIS DUG "MICK".

side, would ax me in its way if it hadn't done that very weel.

I cawd it Mick. One day, when I thowt it were abeaut six months owd, I took it wi' me to th' Post Office i' Coronation Street to get a dug licence. Th' office were crowded. I wur waitin' my turn to get in just behind a woman as wanted a haup'ny stamp when there were such a skrike as made aw th' postmen an' clerks stop sarvin', an' everybody looked to see what were up. It were Mick. This woman had her little wench wi' her, an' I reckon Mick couldn't understand why I should wait for her to be sarved afore me, so it had gotten howd o'th' wench's frock an' were draggin' her eaut o'th' road. Then her mother throwed her arms reaund her, an' skrieked "Murder," "My choilt," an' such like. I rushed at Mick, an' punct him eaut o'th' door into th' middle o'th' street, yelpin' an' yelpin'. Then aw wur quiet for a bit; I geet my licence, an' wur turnin' reaund for t' come eaut, when, behowd, Mick were set down wi' one yer cocked up lookin' so fause I couldn't find i' my heart to hit him again.

That were a good start o'th' trouble I had wi' him.

I daresay yo'n seen on a summer's day when th' visitors bring their dugs to Blackpool a lot o'th' dugs ull get to th' wayter's edge an' dash in time after time for anybody as'll throw sticks or stones for um to swim for. Well, Mick liked that job very weel. One day I took him to th' North Shore wheer th' bathin' vans are. Yo know theres mixed bathin' theer. Well, Mick geet tired o' swimmin' after sticks, so he gallivanted abeaut th' bathin' vans, an' popped in one of um, while th' ladies as hired it were in th' wayter. He coom eaut wi' a red flannel petticoat in his meawth,

dragged it along th' weet sond, an' laid it at my feet. I were so shawmed I hardly knowed wheer to look, but I said summat as I durnt want to say again, an I gan him a punce, an' sent him off back wi' it. He took it back reet enuff, as I thowt, but in a bit I yerd a scream, an' seed two lasses rushin' eaut of a bathin' van, an' tumble i'th' say. It were Mick's wark again. He'd tan th' flannel petticoat back, as I said, but instead o' puttin' it wheer he geet it fro', had dropped it on th' flure of a bathin' van belungin' to two young men. When th' lasses coom back to dress they hadn't noticed th' number on their vans, an' seein' th' red petticoat on th' flure had walked in. They picked th' petticoat up, an' begun o' pikin', bewildered like, among some wescuts an' treasurs for their other garments, when th' young men coom eaut o'th' wayter, an' walked in th' van, which were that as they'd hired. Th' ladies went i' hysteries, an' could be yerd as far as th' South Shore, dashed into th' wayter, an' were welly dreawned i' their fret.

I didn't stop to yer any moor, but skulked off wi' Mick at my heels, one of his ears cocked up, as fast as I could, an' when I geet near whoam I gan him a punce as I thowt he wouldn't forget. Then I yerd a leaud knock at eaur bedroom winder, an' a smash o' glass followed. I looked up, an' seed th' wife. Mad wi' rage when hoo seed me punce Mick, hood hit th' window too hard at me, an' it had brokken. That window cost me five bob, besides a row wi' th' wife, an' hoo didn't spake to me for a month after.

"He were a smart dug," said th' farmer as owned Dan.



"IT'S NOT DEED. WHAT'S ITS TAIL WAGGIN' FOR?"



"He were," said Ferret Een. "Too smart bi th' hawe, for his smartness were t' deeath on him."

"Heaw were that?" I axt.

"Well, yo seen, one day I had him eaut wi' me, an' he'd had tothri feights wi' dugs bigger nor hissel', an' he'd cocked one yer up after every victory to show me he'd won, when, just as we were opposite eaur door comin' whoam, a motor-car coom drivin' up at abeaut forty mile an heaur. Mick seemed to know as th' shuvver (chauffeur) were scorchin' an' he went for th' car. His barkin' did no good, so he jumped up at th' glass screen at th' front, but he wurn't sharp enoof that time, for when he dropt th' motor-car run o'er him, an' cut him in two."

"Poor Mick," said Dan's mester, "that were a sad job."

"It were," said Ferret Een. "Well, I picked him up afore anybody had time to make remarks abeaut his folly, an' th' wife an' eaur Selina bust eaut cryin' as hard as they could; I'd a bad twinge or two mysel', an' could feel a hot drop or two on my cheeks as I took him i'th' back garden. I started diggin' a grave for him, an' I'd made it pratty deep, when eaur Selina sheauted eaut, "Fayther, there's a policemon wants you."

"Hello," I thowt, "what's up neaw," as I put th' spade deawn an' went to th' dur.

"Is that yore dug lyin on th' tramway lines?" says he.

"Nawe," I says, "my dug's just bin run o'er by a motor-car, an' I browt it in to bury it. I'm diggin' his grave i'th' garden neaw."

"But theau's not gotten th' dug," says he; "it's in th' street! Come an' look."

I went, an' sure enoof I'd gotten only hauve o' Mick, for there were th' back eend on him lyin' across th' tram lines, an' his tail were up waggin' like a clock pendylum."

"Why, this is funny," said th' policeman. "He's not deeod, an' still there's only hauf a dug. What's his tail waggin' for?"

"It's just like Mick," I said; "he never were licked in his life, an' he wurn't be licked neaw. He's waggin' his tail, I reckon, becos he's busted a tyre o'th' motor-car as run o'er him."

We aw coom eaut o'th' room at that, except Ferret Een, an' as he geet to th' dur, th' farmer as owned th' sheep dug turned reaund, an' said:

"Neaw, as I look at thee, I think I know yore family."

"Dun yo," said Ferret Een, quite gawmless.

"Aye, I do," said th' farmer. "Hadn't thi' gron-fayther a big family? Tha's a lot o' relations."

"I have," said Ferret Een.

"I thowt so," said th' farmer. "I've read abeaut thi gronfayther. Worn't his fust name Ananias?"

There were a lowf fro' th' lobby, an' Ferret Een said nowt, though some colour coom in his face, as th' farmer bid him Good-neet.



ANOTHER DUG TALE.

TWO-OR-THIRI' wick after meeting Ferret Een we d bin canvassin' for th' picter club again, an' we were tired, so we cawd i'th' Miller's just to have a rest and one pint apiece afore gooin' w hoam. Thoos two farmers fro' Marton were theer again, an' they had that collie dug, Dan, wi' em. After we'd chatted awhile, th' talk turned to dugs. Joe Short were larkin' wi' Dan, which remembered him, an' th' farmer as owned it said to Joe, "Tha seems fond o' dugs; dos't understond 'em."

"Well," said Joe, "I uset' fancy um one time, an' I've reart a lot, but they were a little breed."

"Oy, aye!" says th' farmer, "I dare say tha con tell a tale or two abeaut um if tha likes."

"I happen con," said Joe, "but if I tow'd yo summat as *were* true, yo'd happen say as I were a relation o' Ferret Een."

"Not us," said th' farmer, "we durnt think tha could tell lies like him. But tell us summat worth yerrin' when tha starts."

"Aw reet," said Joe, an' he brasted off wi' this tale. Yo may believe it if yo like.

"It's some yers sin this happened. In thoos days I used to breed breawn Poms, an' I could get good

prices for um too, for they were like black strawberry then, very scarce an' dear. So one time I browt a whelp, six wick owd, fro' Bowton to Blackpool, an' th' chap as wanted it arranged for t' meet me in this very heause to buy it. I'd never bin in th' place afore. When I geet here th' chap hadn't come to meet me, an' he never turned up aw day. Th' lonlord took a fancy to th' pup, an' he'd ha' bowt it but his wife had gone to her mother's for a wick. So I left my Bowton address, an' he said he'd write me for one, if hoo liked. Well, I had to tak th' puppy whoam again. I'd browt it in my pocket, but I were soft enoof to carry it under my arm when I went to th' station for whoam. Th' porter at th' barrier axed me for my ticket, an' I showed it to him. "But wheer's th' ticket for th' dug?" he axt. "What dug?" says I. "I have no dug."

"What's that under thy arm, then? It's not a cat, or a squirrel; perhaps it's a monkey"—an' he lifted my cooat away to look. "Neaw," he says, "it's a dug."

"It's noan a dug," I says, "it's nobbut a whelp."

"Well, I'st want a ticket for it," he said.

"I'st get no ticket for it," I ansert. "Th' Goverment says its noan a dug till its six months owd, an' then I'st ha' to pay th' tax for it."

"Th' Goverment's nowt to do wi' it," th' porter said. "Th' railway company's mester here, an' they say I mun have a ticket for every dug as passes through this gate. But th' station-mester's theer—see what he says.

So I went to th' station-mester an axt him. "Tha'll have to get a ticket for it," says he.

"But it's nobbut six-wick owd," I said.

"It doesn't matter if it's nobbut six minutes owd, tha'll have to get a ticket. . . . An' be sharp," he says, an' he stamped his foote, "for I've kept th' train waitin' six minutes for thee."

That were his joke. But I had to get a ticket, an' it cost a shillin'. I were mad, yo may be sure, an' I grumbled a lot in th' carriage. A lady felt so sorry for me she said she'd pay for th' dug, an' hoo pood her purse eaut.

"Thank yo, missis," I said. "I shall be much obliged if yo will."

So hoo offered me a shillin'. "But I'st want th' dug," hoo said.

Well, I thowt that banged Banniger. I'll bet that woman were a regular moocher at th' bargain ceaunters i'th' drapers' shops.

"Nay, missis," I says, "this whelp's price is two peaund, an' I railly couldn't let yo have it for a shillin'. But I'm much obliged for yo'r offer." Hoo bluushed, an th' passengers lowft.

But I never could get that shillin' eaut o' my crawl, an' one day a letter coom fro' th' lonlord here (as wor then; his name were Jones), sayin' he'd be glad to have a pup o' that breed as I'd shown him. Well, I had noan, but I'd gotten th' mother on um, an' hoo were gooin to have another litter. So, as I were tired o' breedin', I wrote an' offered him th' mother as hoo were for six peaund. "Aw reet," he ansert, "bring her." So I put her in a basket, fastened th' lid deawn, geet a shillin' ticket for her, an' gan th' basket to th' guard. He oppent th' basket to see as she were aw

reet. When we geet to Blackpool I went to th' luggage van for th' basket an' th' guard said, as he honded th' basket eaut, "There's a merricle here. I thowt tha said there were only one dug, but I've yerd a lot o' yelpin'. Here, let's look again." An' he oppent th' basket. "Why, there's nine whelps an' th' mother! I'st want a ticket apiece for this lot."

"Well, tha'll noan ger it," I said. "There were only one dug when I started, an' here's th' ticket for that."

"Well, there's moor nor one neaw," he says, "an' I want a ticket apiece."

I were gettin' a bit mad by this, an' I ansert, "I've only one ticket, an' I'st pay no moor."

"Yah tha will," he said, as he cawd th' station mester, wot knowed. He oppent th' basket lid, an' theer were nine o'th' bonniest brown poms yo ever seed.

"That's gotten one ticket, tha says, an' there's ten dugs. I want nine shillin' moor fro' thee," an' he grinned so fat till his silk hat lifted up.

My temper were gradely up neaw, as th' litter were welly stewed, an' th' mother wanted feedin. "Yo'll noan get it," I said, "there were only one dug when I started, but th' chep engine has shook th' train so much that th' pups ha' coom afore their time. I'st want compensation if owt happens."

"Compensation be hanged!" he says, "tha'll ha' to pay for um, or else I'st keep aw th' lot."

"Aw reet; keep um," I says, an' I wrote Mester Jones's address on a bit o' papper, an' gan it him. "These dugs belong to th' lonlord o'th' Miller's Arms,"



"Yo'll noan get it" I said.

I said, "an' he'll want ten dugs off yo, so if yo wurn't let me tak um, an' ony on um dees, we'll ruin yore little railway company."

"Aw reet," he ansert; "pay up an' tak um; if tha doesn't I'st keep um."

So I coom to th' Miller's Arms, an' tow'd Mester Jones, an' afore I'd finished my tale a porter coom in carryin' th' basket on his showders, an' said th' station mester had sent th' dugs, wi' his compliments, an' thowt he were reet in demandin' th' fare for um, but had fun' he were wrung, and would Mester Jones o'erlook th' mistake.

"So Mester Jones looked in th' basket, an' findin' th' dugs aw reet, he said he'd o'erlook it this time, an' he stood th' porter a pint for fotechin' um. But I never geet my shillin' back."

"That's very good," said th' farmer as owned Dan, "an' it shows heaw railway companies ull do you if yo durnt watch 'em."





GINGER'S CUSTOMER.

SHE were nobbut a mite—abeaut nine yer owd—
 but she could cleon a pair o' dursteps wi' ony
 woman, an' as for nussin' a choilt, well, th'
 little darlins seemed to come i'th' world o' purpose to
 find her a job, for hoo'd very oft one in her arms.
 She'd two owder brothers, an' hoo brooshed their
 shoon o' coartin' neets, an' hoo were th' one as her
 mother could trust to send to Owd Ginger's shop for
 oather tape, shoe tees, or groceries. So, aw th'
 family cawd on Little Emma for onythin' as wantid
 dooin', an' hoo were th' drudge for th' lot.

Owd Ginger were a Scotchman, an' his name were
 Mac Summat, but Bowton folk couldn't get their
 tungs reaund th' Summat, so they cawd him Ginger,
 because his yure were red. He kept a shop, an' sowd
 everythin', like th' Co-op. When Ginger fust coom
 i'th' nayburhood he talked Scotch, an' nobry could
 understand him for a while, but he soon geet into th'
 Lancashire twang, though he sometimes dropt some
 Scotch in it. (That's nobbut a joke.)

Heawsumever, little Emma were a favourite wi' Ginger; he awlus breetened up a lot when hoo went to his shop, an' she very oft coom owt wi' a cake or some towfy as Ginger had trated her to; so Little Emma were fond o' Ginger. (That's another joke.)

But Little Emma crabbed him onct. He thowt, for a bit, hoo were playin' a trick on him, but th' choilt did it quite innercent. It were like this:—

One day Little Emma's mother sent her to Ginger's shop. "Tak th' traycle jug, Emma," hoo said, "an' fotch two peaund o' black traycle. Here's sixpence, an' tha' wants tuppence back. I'll put th' sixpence i'th' jug, so as tha'll not loase it."

Then Emma started off, an' on th' road hoo met Charley Stone, a little nipper she played wi' when she'd th' chance, an' were very fond on. Charley started larkin' wi' her, as lads generally do wi' wenches as soon as they con walk beaut tumblin', an' yerrin' th' sixpence rattle i'th' traycle jug, he tried to grab it. Little Emma dodged him, took th' sixpence eaut o'th' jug, an' put it in her meawth. Then hoo hooked it off to Ginger's shop.

"Well, little Starleet," said Ginger, "what does tha want this mornin'?"

"Two peaund o' black traycle," said Little Emma, "an' tuppence back."

"Aye, an' tha'st have it," said Ginger, an' he reicht th' big traycle can deawn, put Little Emma's jug on th' scales, an' teemed th' syrup in till th' jug bumped deawn.

"Here tha art, little cherub," said Ginger, "an' tha wants tuppence back, does ta? Well, if tha gies me sixpence tha'st ha' tuppence."

“Yo’n gotten it!” said Little Emma, who’d forgotten her larkin wi’ Charley Stone. “Didn’t yo’ tak it fro th’ bottom o’th’ jug?”

“Wot?” he skrieked, leauder nor a set o’ bagpipes, “at bottom o’th’ jug! Why didn’t tha say so afore? Tha careless wench? Seethi’ wot trouble tha’s gan me!” Then he geet a little seive, an’ temd th’ traycle through it back again into th’ big can, but he couldn’t find th’ sixpence.

“Tha’s not browt th’ money, tha’ little imp,” said Ginger, his face gettin’ red, “an’ tha wants th’ traycle an’ tuppence back for nowt. Ger off wi’ thee. Hoots, toot.”

Little Emma were in a terrible state while Ginger were carryin’ on this road, an’ while hoo were cryin’ hoo oppent her meawth an’ hoo felt th’ sixpence slip fro’ under her tung. “Oh, I’d forgotten, Ginger,” hoo cried, “th’ sixpence is in my meawth.” An’ hoo put her finger in, but, as her hond were tremblin’, she lost her grab, an’ it slipped deawn her throat.

“I’ve swallowed it,” said th’ choilt, th’ tears runnin’ off her cheeks as if they were macintosh. “Oh, Ginger, what mun I do?”

Ginger’s heart softened when hee seed her so much troubled, an’ he said: “Well, I cornt empty thee th’ same as I emptied th’ traycle jug, but, as I believe thee, I’ll fill it again. Tak it, an’ tell thi mother to send th’ fourpence th’ next time tha comes.”

I never yerd whether Ginger geet his fourpence, but I think Little Emma lost that sixpence for ever.



"Eh! I've swallowed it!"



SARS-PRILLA.

GENERALLY speikin, I'm a greit believer i' wimmin. If ever a chap goes wrung, an' loases his balance, if there's a chance ov his ever gettin' reet again it's oather his mother or his wife as con do th' trick ; his wife for choice.

There's nowt I like to see as weel as a warkin' chap smookin' his pipe after his tay an' a day's hard wark, sittin' by th' fireside wi' his wife an' childer gathered reaund him, listenin' to a tale he's tellin', while th' fire sparkles breet, th' fireirons are like lookin' glasses, an' th' harthstone so cleon it wud show a cockroach up. Yo may tell then as that chap's gotten a wife worth havin', an' such women con generally keep a chap straight, when hoo goes th' reet road abeaut it. I've a little tale here ov a chap as wanted some strait-enin', but he'd a wife as made no booans of a job o' that soart, when hoo made her mind up.

Th' chap's name were Dick Hampson, an' he were a spinner. He wor a good worker, an' yo'd caw him him level-yedded, but every neaw an' again he'd goo on th' spree for a month at a time, an' then make a reglar soss of hissels. His wife, Margit, were one o'th' best heausewives I've ever seen, an' her two childer

were noticed as th' prattiest an' cleonest i'th' naburhood. But Dick's sprees were Margit's ghost, an' I used to wonder, when I seed wrinkles o' care on her face when Dick were drinkin' heaenever hoo'd such patience wi' him. But hoo had, an' she didn't black-guard him at such times. Nowt o'th' soart; she'd coax him, an' when he were gettin' reaund an' his lips were parched an' his throat dry hoo'd do th' Lazarus business, an' fotch him a pint o' ale to relieve his sufferin'. While he were suppin' it hoo'd talk to him quietly an' sayriously abeaut dammin' his sowl an' his body till Dick would be ashamed ov hissels', an' while th' misery were on he'd promise when he get reaund never to taste again.

Well, th' last spree he had were woss than ever. He were off wark lunger, an' he supped moor ale, but summat happened as made him teetotal, though it welly kilt him.

Margit had coddled an' nussed him moor like a mother than a wife, an' as he geet a bit better, after givin' her a lot o' trouble, hoo made bowd to give him a talkin' to just at th' time when there were a gradely thirst on him. He axt her just to fotch him one moor pint. "It'll be th' last," he said, "for I've made up my mind when I get better never to touch, taste, or hondle any moor."

"Dick," said Margit, "tha's said that so oft that I'm hard o' belief. But I'd give owt as I have if I were sure tha'd keep that promise."

"Well," ansert Dick, "if theau'll fotch me a sup o' summat just neaw tha may believe me this time, for my throat's fairly brunnin', an' my yed's comin' off th' top."

Margit railly felt sorry for him, he were so bad. I'll fotch thee summat, Dick," hoo said, "but wilita have a pint o' yarb beer instead uv ale? It'll slake thi thirst just as weel, and do thi yed good."

"Aye," ansert Dick; "I'll have owt as is weet. Fot me some sars-prilla."

So Margit, pleosed as he'd have it, put het shawl on an' went to Bill Clegg's shop for a pint o' sars-prilla. When hoo geet theer Bill happened to be eaut, an' his niece, Susannah, coom to sarve her. Margit towd her what hoo wanted, but th' wench didn't know wheer it were. So hoo went to th' bottom o'th' stairs, an' sheauted to Bill's wife, who were cleonin' th' rooms, "Aunt Sarah, wheer dun yo keep th' sars-prilla? Dick Hampson wife wants a pint."

"Why," ansert her aunt, "there's two full bottles i'th' front o'th' bottom shelf, filled wi' black stuff. It's th' bottle nearest to thee."

So hoo geet th' bottle nearest to her, an' temd a pint into Margit's jug, and drawed tuppence for it.

"Margit took it whoam, an' gan it to Dick, who put th' jug to his lips, an' drained every drop. He pood his face when it were gooin' deawn, but he were so thirsty he'd ha' supped owt. In a bit he begun o' feelin' queer, an' his stomach were unsettlin'. He put up wi' it for a while, not carin' to let Margit see as owt ailed him. He geet so bad in a bit, an' were vomitin' so much, that Margit were fretend, so hoo rushed off to Bill Clegg's for summat to stop th' gripin', pain an' sickness. Hoo met Missis Clegg on th' road. She were hurryin' to Margit's to tell her as heaw Susannah had used th' wrung bottle, an' instead of a pint o'

sars-prilla she'd emptied hauf-a-dozen black draughts in Margaret's jug.

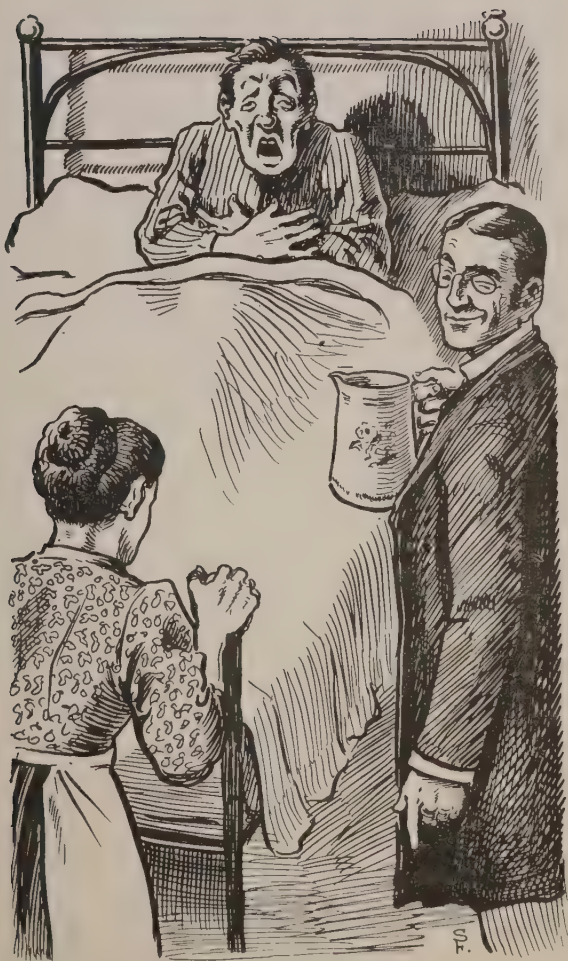
Margit were in a terrible way at yerrin' this. "Oh dear," hoo cried, "whatever mun I do; it'll kill him. Let's goo an' see if yore Bill connot give him summat for it;" an hoo started off, pooin' Margit wi' her.

"Nawe, tha' munnot goo, Margit," said Missis Clegg, howdin' back. "Eaur Bill doesn't know ov owt as'll do him good, an' he doesn't know abeaut th' mistake; if he did, he'd carry on, for eaur Susannah gan thee six black draughts, which were a shillin', an' tha only paid tuppence. I'll tell thee what to do—go to Doctor Roberts, an' tell him abeaut it. He'll mak him aw reet, an' durnt trouble, black draughts aren't peison. I'll pay th' doctor, if tha'll promise not to tell eaur Bill abeaut it. He'd carry on so."

Margit weren't in a humour for argifyin, so hoo turned off to Doctor Roberts's surgery.

Doctor Roberts were th' medical mon for everybody i'th' nayburhood. He were very kind to th' poor, an' just th' reet mon to have aside on yo when yo were ill, so one may say he were everybody's friend. But he were a bit ov a wag, for aw that, an' liked a joke, as yo shall see.

Margit had lost a deol o' wynt by th' time hoo geet to th' surgery, but as luck ud have it, th' doctor were in. When Margit had tow'd him th' tale between sobs an' shortness o' breath, th' owd doctor smiled, but he tried to comfort her. "There's no danger," he said, "so I'll mix him a bottle that'll soon put him to rights. Let's see, I've met him several times lately, an' judgin' by the aimlessness of his gait, his legs



"Ooh!" groaned Dick, "I'm deein!"

seemed unable to decide which way to carry him ; by which I concluded that he was having another drinkin' bout. If so, how long has he been fuddlin' this time ?"

Margit didn't expect this, but hoo towed him th' truth, an' hoo could see as th' doctor were chucklin' to hissels. But hoo were tan aback when Doctor Roberts axt her if hood like him cured fro' drinkin'."

"I should that," said Margit, "but yo'll not manage that ; for I've tried aw I know. Besides, but for a spree neaw an' again, he's a good husbont, an' I wouldn't have yo' hurt him."

"There's no danger, as I told you," said th' doctor, "but fuddlin's a nervous disorder, an' if he's as bad as you represent now, I could so act on his system with make-believe that a revulsion in his appetite for intoxicants would ensue, and he would never taste again."

Margit didn't understand everythin' what th' doctor said, but hoo knowed what he meant, an' hoo agreed to what he said, an' even promised to help him.

"Well, then," said th' doctor, "take this bottle, give him a dose, an' I'll call to see him in half-an-hour."

Margit rushed off whoam, an' hoo fun their Dick aw uv a lump on th' floor i' awful agony. His een were shut, his face blue, an' th' sweat were rowlin' off him as if he were in a Turkish bath. Wit' th' help o' some nayburs hoo managed to get him upstairs, an' bi th' time they'd gotten him i' bed Doctor Roberts coom. He walked to th' bed wheer Dick lay groanin' after th' shakin he'd had i' bein' pood abeaut, an' oppenin' one uv Dick's een wi' his finger, said quite loud, "It's a bad case of alcoholic poisoning."

"Oh-o-o-o !" groaned Dick, as if he were deein'.

"Give me some mustard an' a jug of hot water,"

said th' doctor. "He must have a strong emetic at once."

Dick groaned again while Margit geet th' hot wayter an' mustard. Th' doctor pretended to mix it, an' he put th' jug to Dick's lips. After a lot o' persuadin' Dick oppent his meawth, an' th' doctor temd th' wayter deawn him faster nor he could sup it.

Dick were sick in a minute, an' th' bedcloas geet spotted aboon a bit.

"Oh-o-o my!" groaned Dick, "I'm deein'."

"Oh, no, my man, you'll be better in a while," said th' doctor. Then he turned to Margit, an' said, leaud enoof for Dick to yer what he said, "Don't let him move for three days, and don't allow anyone to talk to him. I'll call to-morrow for a thorough examination. Meantime, if he becomes worse send word, and I'll come at once."

Th' doctor went downstairs an' Margit followed. "Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Hampson," said th' doctor, lowfin'; "we'll cure him, and if he has any more sprees I shall be a false prophet. Give him warm water to drink every two hours, with a very little mustard in it. This will remind him that he's poorly. To-morrow morning you may give him a cup of beef tea."

"Aw reet, doctor; but if he gets yezzier an' wants some ale mun he have it?"

"What!" said th' doctor, "have you already forgotten your promise to help me? No; he mustn't have any ale or anything like it. He won't ask for it or want it again—of that I'm sure—so don't show any false sympathy by tempting him."

Then th' doctor went, an' Margit seet off upstairs to her husbont. Hoo fun th' bed empty, an' comin'

deawn to look for him hoo met him crawlin' in eaut o' th' back dur. "Eh, my poor lad," hoo said, "tha shouldn't ha' geet eaut o' bed. Th' doctor says tha mun stop in for three days, an be very quiet."

"Oh dear!" wailed Dick, "I cornt stop i' bed three minutes, let alone three days. I'm sure I'm done for."

He looked hawf deead, an' laid his yed on her showder as hoo helped him back. "Neaw, lie thee still, that's a good lad, an' I'll fotch th' emmetic up."

"Oh-o-o!" groaned Dick, "nawe, durnt. I corn't stond any moor on um."

Th' very seaund o'th' word acted like magic on Dick, for he rowled off th' bed an' scuttered deawn th' stairs an' into th' yard faster nor a deein' chap would be expected to goo. When he coom i'th' heause again Margit had to help him upstairs, for his legs doubled up under him. "Oh-o-o my!" he groaned, when hoo were ill-in him up i' bed, "if th' Lord ull forgi' me this time I'st never touch a drop o' ale again as lung as I live. Oh, dear; oh, dear." (Yawp!) Then he were sick again.

Margit were railly touched at seet uv her husbont when hood gotten him composed. Hoo could see his flesh were gooin', an' his thermometer were risin'. Hoo lunged for th' next day, an' th' doctor. An' they coom.

Doctor Roberts were theer very early on, but afore he went upstairs he reminded Margit uv her promise to help him to cure Dick uv his spreein'.

"Don't be afraid," said th' doctor, "of what I say during the examination: it may be all wrong, but act as if I were in earnest, an' when the examination's

over follow me downstairs, and I'll tell you what to do."

So th' doctor went to examine Dick, who were fast asleep after a weary neet. He pood Dick's shirt front oppen, put th' trumpet o'er his heart, an' put his yer to it. This wakkend Dick. After listenin' a bit, th' doctor said, "Just as I thought. Heart terribly weak, probably diseased; clearly a case of alcohol poisoning." Then he axt Dick if he'd a pain in his back. "Aye," groaned Dick, "but I've one a deol woss i' my stummack."

"I thought so," said th' doctor, "kidneys worse than heart. Open your eyes."

Dick groaned, an oppent his een. "Um! Yes!" said th' doctor. "He's highly feverish, Mrs. Hampson. I'm afraid we shall have a job to pull him through. Give him half a pound of castor oil with four ounces of turkey rhubarb in it; perhaps that will clear his stomach."

"Whow-ow!" sheauted Dick; "for God's sake, doctor, durnt order that. My stummuck's cleared eaut enoof, I'm sure," an' he dropped back, done up.

"Yes, but you want to get better for the sake of your wife and children, don't you?"

"Aye, I do," groaned Dick; "but durnt gi' me any castor oil or rhubarb if yo con help it."

"Well, I'll see," said th' doctor. "but if we get you round from this I hope it will be a lesson for you, for you've been as near death as I care to see a young man."

"It will, doctor, it will. If I get better this time I'll never touch drink again."

Margit followed th' doctor deawnstairs, an' he'd a grin on his face when he towld her as Dick were

gettin' on aw reet, an' hoo could give him some beef tay. But hoo mut keep him in bed a day or two.

Margit did as th' doctor tow'd her, an' Dick geet reaund, but when he come deawnstairs he weighed two score less nor he did when he fust went up.

I've never yerd as Dick Hampson had a spree sin then, but I did yer as he'd gotten to be th' manager o' th' mill, an' I do know as if yo'll go th' chapel at Lone Ends uv a Sunday yo'll see see a chap, wi' a grey nob neaw, leodin' th' qulre. They caw him Mester Hampson, but his front name's Dick.

ON A MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY.

(Written on a card, at my daughters' request, on the eve of their mother's birthday.)

MAY Old Time pass blindly,
 When he's dealing out care ;
 And Nature treat kindly
 A fond mother so rare ;
 May Heaven show'r blessings
 Upon her whom we love,
 And after life's journey
 May we meet her above.



JIM ROGERS'S WART.

(Reprinted, by permission, from "Teddy Ashton's Annual.")

WE were set deawn comfortably, Joe Short an' me, in th' Millers' Arms, i' Blackpool, suppin' a well-earnt pint apiece—that is, we'd earnt it for walkin' abeaut aw day injoyin' eaur-sels. We'd bin talkin' abeaut th' Budget, an' he'd gotten rayther excited, for Joe's a red-hot Radical, while everybody knows I'm a Tory. Joe were gettin' th' wust o'th' argyment, when he said, 'Oh, bi hanged to th' Budget, let's drop it; we'st be fawin' eaut in a bit.' Just as he said that, who should come walkin' in but Tum Entwistle, lookin' as glum as if he'd swallowed a mustard playster.

"Hello, Tum!" we booath said at once. "What's browt thee here? An' wheer's Sarah?"

I met just say as Joe Short, mysel', an' Tum Entwistle were aw tacklers at th' same wayvin' shed i' Bowton, an' nobry ud never seen or yerd o' Tum Entwistle bein' in a aleheawse afore, or ever walkin' abeaut bi' hissel. His wench, Sarah Watson, were awlus wi' him, so yo' may be sure we were surprised.

"Well," said Tum, "I yerd yo'd come to Blackpool

for th' wick-end, an' as I'd nowt else to do I thowt I'd come too. I knowd yo'd stop at th' owd diggins, an' so I've planked mysel' theer. But I didn't expect findin' yo' here. Sup up, an' have a pint wi' me."

So we supped up, an' Tum cawd for three pints, an' then I said: "But I thowt tha were a teetotaler; it seems I'm wrung."

"So tha art," replied Tum, "for I broke when Sarah jackt me up six wick sin, but I'st ha' to put th' peg in, or else I'st peg eaut."

"Sarah jackt thee up!" said Joe, surprised; "well I never yerd nowt like that. Whatever hasta done to deserve that tratement?"

"Nowt as I know on," answered Tum, "except as Bill Wrigley's bin hangin' after her a lung while neaw, an' th' last time me an' Sarah were eaut together hoo were very sulky, an hoo towd me at last hoo were turet o' courtin'. Hoo wished me no harm, hoo said, but I were too slow for an ordinary woman, so hoo'd made up her mind to chuck it, until sombry turned up as ud talk abeaut gettin' wed afore they'd keep a wench hangin' up for six yer, to be lifted off th' nail just as he wanted."

"Well," axt Joe, "an' what did tha say to that?"

"Say! What could I say?" ansert Tum, wi' his een showin' wayter. "I said nowt, an' hoo laft me, beaut even sayin' 'Good neet.'"

I could hardly howd misel' when I yerd aw this talk, so I chimed in: "Well, Tum, I never yerd owt like that noather. I awlus thowt tha were slow when women were abeaut, but I did think tha'd moor grit in thee than let an ugly beggar like Bill Wrigley tak' a breet wench like Sarah fro' off thi shoe-tips. But

Bill's smart, an' no mistake. Tha'll ha' to get her back agen, for I see tha'rt on th' down'ard track, an' if tha'rt gooin' t' dreawn thi trouble i' drink tha'll find as th' drink ull dreawn thee.

"Tha'll ha' to get her back; an' I'll tell thee heaw to manage it. But I'st ha' to tell thee a tale—a true 'un—and if tha's sense enoof to act at onct on th' moral tha wins.

"It's ten yer sin' me an' Jim Rogers fust coom to Blackpool, an' as we were single chaps we'd an idea o' pickin' up just to make th' time pass in a jolly way; but, as tha'll see, Cupid nabbed us booath, an' I durn't regret it. We were walkin' bi th' North Pier when we met two bonny wenches, an' we know'd um bi seet, for they booath wove at King's wayvin' shed. I durn't boast o' ony good looks mysel', but I mun say as Jim Rogers were th' feawest chap I ever did see. He were flat-footed an' he'd a thick red nose, an' at th' eend on it he had a big wart, an' this wart had toothri hair growin', which, when he didn't trim um off, made th' wart look like a deeod spider wi' its legs cocked up. Yet altho' he were as ugly as a devil-fish, he were as breet as a star i'th' firmament.

"Well, we axt these wenches to have a walk, an' they were ever ready. So we happened to mate wi' th' reet uns, for we each wed th' one we pickt. Neaw I soon fun' eawt as I were only a second favourite i'th' cooartin' line, for eaur Nance thowt me, I'm sure, awfully slow, just hecos Jim went at it as if he were on piece-wark, an' couldn't get through hawf enoof. We took um on th' pier for a start, an' we weren't theer hauf an heaur afore Jim hurried Bess (that were his wench's name) off to ha' summat to eit, an' laft

HIS SUNDAY WART.



HIS 'WARTY UN.



me an' Nance gawpin' an' wonderin'. He said he'd meet us at th' Tower at two o'clock; an' he were theer, an' Bess an' aw. So we aw went in, an' Jim an' Bess danced every measure on th' bill o' fare; then he bustled her into th' caffy for tay, an' they were just finishin' when we fun wheer they were. Then he'd th' cheek to tell us they were gooin' to th' theatre, an' they'd see us awwhoam, when th' play were o'er. An' he bustled Bess off afore we'd hauf finished eitin'. So Nance an' me had to walk abeaut like two softies wi' nowt to say, bein', so to speak, strangers to one another.

"Nance has tow'd me mony a time abeaut Bess gettin' whoam that neet, tired, but happy. Hoo'd never had such a day afore, an' hoo thowt hoo'd gotten th' nicest felly as ever lived. He hadn't gi'n her time to look at his face, or else hoo met ha' thowt different: an' hoo tow'd eaur Nance, too, as it *were* nice to be kissed by a chap wi' a good mustache! Well, I fairly chinked wi' lowfin' at that, for Jim were cleeon shaven, an' what Bess had ta'n for a mustache were those three hairs on Jim's wart ut had tickled her face! Well th' next day were th' same: Jim bustled her off to Fleetwood, an' Bess never could tell us whether hoo went theer on th' tram or bi wayter, but hoo did remember bein' sick, an' when they geet to Fleetwood Jim trated her to brandy an' oysters to mak' her aw reet again. An' when they geet whoam at neet Bess could hardly stond, hoo were so tired, but hoo were very happy, an' tow'd eaur Nance ut hoo were sure as Blackpool were th' heaven they uset to sing abeaut in th' Sunday Skoo, an' Jim were th' archangel showin' her th' seets o' Paradise.

There's an end to booath pleasure an' toil, an' of cooarse we had to goo to Bowton again an' wark, but Jim kept th' bustlin' gam up theer, an' I know Bess were fain when it were o'er, an' they coom eaut o'th' church mon an' wife. They were wed twelve months afore us, an' just as we were abeaut teein' th' knot they'd a babby born. It were a lad, an' a nice choilt, too, but it had one blemish, an' that were a wart on its nose. It were hardly noticed at fust, but as th' choilt grew so did th' wart.

"Neaw here's th' mooast remarkable thing abeaut it; Bess didn't know till th' choilt were born as Jim had a wart on his nose. It coom eaut at th' kessenin'. They'd had a bit of a weet doo at th' tay-time an' after, an' next mornin' Jim were sufferin' fro' th' after-effects. He were set in th' rockin' cheer when Bess coom deawn th' stairs o'th' Monday mornin', an' his een were a bit blood-shot, an' his nose were redder nor usual, an' th' wart at th' eend on it were as blue as a wimbery. Bess looked at him i' surprise, an' drew a lung breath. Then hoo said: 'Oh! Jim, I've never had a gradely look at thee afore. If I'd seen that face afore we were wed I'm sure I shouldn't ha' had thee.'

"'Well,' said Jim, 'tha'd plenty o' chances o' lookin'. Why didn't tha look?'

"'Look!' said Bess. 'Heaw could I look? Tha never gan me time to look. Tha bustled me abeaut too much. . . . But theau'rt noan so bad to me, after aw, so I mun make th' best o'th bargain. I never knowed as theau'd a wart on thi nose afore, an' th' choilt taks after thee, I'm sorry to say. But I durn't

BLESS
OUR
HOME.



"I NEVER KNOW'D THAD A WART ON THY NOSE AFORE."

want that thing to stop at th' eend of its nose aw its life, so we mun find some road o' shiftin' it.'

" 'Oh, that's yezzy enoof,' said Jim. 'An owd woman tow'd my mother ov a remedy when I were a lad, but I'd gotten too big to try it, but it owt to tak it off th' choilt. Tha mun get some olive ile an' bath brick, an' bustle it off.' An' hoo did.

"So, Tum, tha sees th' moral. Goo back to Sarah; get her to gie thee another chance, an' if hoo will tak thee on trial again, bustle her."

* * * * *

That tale made a impression. A bit after we geet back to Bowton Tum Entwistle left eaur wayvin' shed, an' geet a job as under-manager at Horrocks's. He'd smartened hissels up a good lot, an' he'd begun o' wearin' collars everyday. Abeaut six months at after Sarah coom to eaur heawse one neet an' axt for me.

I were a bit surprised when eaur Nance sheauted as I were wanted, for Sarah had never been afore. I axt her in, an' when hoo were set deawn, hoo said:

"Anoch, Tum wants to know if thee an th' missis ull come to eaur weddin' next Saturday but one."

"Why, I thowt theaud gin him up a lung while sin', bein', so to speik, too slow for a ordinary woman." That were my chaff, an' hoo smiled.

"Too slow!" hoo ansert; "not he. I uset think he were, but it were a mistake. He's too sharp neaw; an' I'st oather ha' to wed him or be killed. He runs me off my legs. He took me to Barrow Bridge a month sin', an' when we geet to th' sixty-three steps he put one leg on one side o'th ladder and t'other leg on th' t'other side, an' slurred deawn th' lot, an' when he geet to th' bottom he looked up, an' sheauted, 'Come on,

Sarah.' 'Oh, lord,' I thowt, 'does he think I con get deawn like that?' an' I begun o' walkin' deawn th' steps. He were rayther impatient, an' when I geet to th' bottom I were eaut o' wynt. As soon as I could get my breath, I said, 'Tum, this wark ull have to stop; no woman could stond it. Tha'rt drivin' me to th' grave.'

"I'm very sorry, Sarah," he says; "I durnt' want to do thee ony harm; but if I'm gooin' too fast for thee let's get wed, an' then theau con settle deawn."

"An' what didta say to that, Sarah?" I axt.

"Well, I were a bit tak'n back, for I didn't expect that just then, but I thowt we'd courted lung enoof, so I tow'd him I were willin', an' we went off theer an' then to put th' axins in. We're not makin' a big fuss abeaut it, but Tum thowt he'd like Joe Short to stond as th' best mon, him bein' sengle, an' he'd like yo' to come an' aw. Yo' seen, he's known yo' so long, an' he's warked wi' yo' for mony a yer."

"Let's goo, Anoch," said eaur Nance; "it's nobbut reet. I should like to see th' weddin'." But that's just like eaur Nance; a woman ud goo to a weddin' every day if hoo were axt.

"An' besides, th' manager o' Horrocks's is gooin' to China in a fortnit, an' Tum's getten his job," Sarah said, "so do come."

That clinched it. It would ha' looked as if I were jealous o' Tum's good fortin if I'd refused, so I tow'd Sarah heaw glad I were, an' we'd goo, but I didn't know what I were lettin' mysel' in for, or I shouldn't ha' promised. But I'll tell that tale another time.



SCARPOLOGY.

WHEN their second choilt were born Jim Rogers invited me o'er to Bowton. He tow'd me i'th' letter they'd gotten a bonny fat wench, as took after its mother; an' as a bit of a joke, I reckon, he said its nose were aw reet. I know'd it ud be nice if it were like its mother, for Bess, afore hoo were wed, were as nice a wench as ever ony chap need get spliced to. So I went to th' kessenin', an' stopped wi' um for th' wick-eend.

At th' Saturday neet we were sittin' i'th' heause smookin', an' Jim were readin' th' evenin' papper. He turned to me an' said, "Listen to this, Anoch," an' he read—

YOUR BOOTS TELL YOUR CHARACTER.

Dr. Garrier, of Bale, declares that scarpology is a science to which criminal investigators as well as others who wish to read character accurately will have to pay more attention. It is the art of knowing men and women by the examination of their footwear. The doctor says that, given a pair of boots worn by their owner for at least two months, there is not the slightest reason why one should not be able to tell the character, disposition, and habits of the wearer. "It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this new science," says the doctor, "for by careful practice one may, after a few minutes' acquaintance, be able to gauge a man at his worth, and this simply by glancing at his feet."

"Neaw," he said, "what dost think o' that for rubbitch?"

"I durnt know abeaut its bein' rubbitch," I said; "doctors are gettin' very clivver neaw-days. Look at that French chap—I think his name's Bertillon—he con tell a thief bi his finger marks."

"That may be," replied Jim, "but heaw the deuce con he tell a chap's karracter bi lookin' at his shoon. If it were his feet I could understond it. We'st ha' some doctor sayin' in a bit as he con tell a chap's name if he nobbut smells his breath! . . . Nawe, I'st noan believe it."

"Well," I said, "th' subject's too deep for me, so I cornt say owt abeaut it; but, if there is owt in it, we'st ha' to be careful wheer we plant eaur feet, an' we'st ha' to brun eaur owd shoon when we'n done wi' um, or else th' nayburs ull be sayin' as its us as stole their clooas off th' lines o' weshin' days. An' we'st not ha' to leove eaur shoon eautside o'th' bedroom dur at th' lodgins when we goo to Blackpool for th' holidays, or else th' sarvants ull happen swop um, an' we'd praps get a pair wi' a bad karracter."

"Aye, that met be done," said Jim, "if there were owt in it, but there isn't. Tak my shoon for a start. Tha knows my feet are not what I should like um to be, bi a lung way, but I cornt help it. An' yet I durnt think I'm a bad karracter."

Bess were bathin' th' lad i'th' kitchen, when hoo popped her yed i'th' durway, an' said, "Well, Jim, tha knows tha'rt not as good as tha should be sometimes."

"Well, if I'm not, what's that to do wi' my feet or my shoon? I'm noan so bad to thee, after aw. Tha'd

SOLD BY AUCTION

ALL THOSE.

11.



" why! they're fourteen inches long "

better sheaut i'th' street as tha feeshed for a' angel, an' nobbut a mon swallowed thi bait."

Jim were nettled at Bess for interruptin' him, for he doesn't oft talk to her that road. Hoo'd sense enoof to see hoo'd hurt his feelins, so she said no moor.

Jim turned to me again, an' went on: "As I wur sayin', heaw could he tell my karracter bi my shoon. I have to goo to Manchester to be measured for um bi a chap as does nowt else but make shoon to fit one's feet i'stead of fitting th' feet into his shoon. Neaw, look at these," an' he pickt his Sunday shoon up, which were laid aside o'th' fender, "they durnt look like shoon, dun they? Well, they're yezzy, an' I mun have um yezzy, for on my left foote I've gotten two bunions, as hard as Billy Mug's face; an' when I were a lad, Ned Cunliffe's tacker-up slipped off th' flag he were liftin', an' it dropt on my big toe, an' split th' nail, an' ever sin' then its grown uppards istead o' lengthways, an' every neaw an' again I have to file it deawn. An' my reet foote's wuss. Under my big toe I've a nasty corn as speils my razzor every time I cut it, an' on my fourth toe I've another corn what I cornt ger at to keep in order; an' in th' baw o' my foote I've a segg as big as th' bush uv a cart wheel, an' it makes me yell 'Jerusalem' sometimes. So heaw the hec con onybody tell my karracter fro' th' boots I have to wear if I'm to walk at aw.

"I'll show thee heaw a chap's karracter connot be tow'd fro' his shoon. I remember two-thri yer sin I d formert a new pair in Manchester, an' when they were ready I went for um. I put um on in th' shop to see if they were aw reet, an' as they were yezzy to my feet I kept um theer. Th' shoemaker lapt mi owc

shoon in breawn papper, so I browt um that road, intendin' to wear um eaut, as they weren't hauf done. I put um on th' rack in th' train, an' when I geet to Bowton I forgeet um. I bethowt me th' next day, an' wrote to th' company axin if they'd fun a pair o' big shoon in a railway carriage. In abeaut a wick I geet a answer that they'd fun nowt o' that soart, but on th' train I travelled by they'd fun two postmen's leather bags lapt i' breawn papper, an' they'd sent word to th' post office i' London, as they thowt they'd bin stown! Well, I felt thoos were my shoon, but I made no bother, an' forgeet um. In a while after I were i' Manchester again, an' I happened to pass a auction reawm, an' I went in when a chap towd me they were sellin' t' things wot had bin left an' lost in railway trains. I bethowt me o' my shoon, when, behowd, in a bit th' auctioneer put up two pair, an' I could see as one pair were thoos I'd lost! Tha's yerd auctioneers' gammon when they're sellin' stuff. They think they're clivver, but that mon geet three bob less for them shoon than he would ha' done but for his joke. He said he didn't know what to caw th' big pair, but if they were shoon they'd belonged to a foote pad. I were a bit riled at that, for I'd noticed a policemon in th' place lookin' at my feet, an' I sheauted eaut, "Heaw dost know he were a foote pad?" He ansert in a jiffy, "Becos th' chap as wore um 'ud have to pad his feet!" That were good for him, an' th' folk lowft, aw except me. So I nobbut offered him a bob for um, an' he knocked um deawn for that. I sowd t' other pair for hauf-a creawn to a chap as couldn't forshome to bid after th' auctioneer's joke, an' as I were comin' eaut th' bobby as I mentioned followed me, an' axt me t' let him look

at um. I did. "Why," he said, "they're fourteen inches lung!" "They're pratty big," I ansert "Well, if I were thee I'd tak these to th' Teawn Ho', an th' Chief Cunstable 'ull happen gi' thee ten shillin' for um. Tha sees th' littlest policemon i' Manchester has fourteens feet—mine's sixteens—an' they're flat, like thine. They're bothered abeaut gerrin' shoon to fit um, an' thine's just th' pattern. Tak um to him."

"An' did tha tak um?" I asked.

"Nawe, I didn't want th' bother, as I'd gotten um back for nowt, wi' my railway fare chucked in, so I browt um back, an' wore um mysel'."

* * * * *

Bess has tow'd eaw'r Nance as when Jim were coortin her he could mak' her believe ow't, an' I think sometimes he ratches um when he tells me a tale, but I con pleeos mysel' abeaut believin' it, so I say nowt. I tow'd him, heawever, that there were rayson in th' argyment part o' what he said, an' we'd caw th' new science o' Scarpology—Scrapology.

* * * * *

I connot finish this beaut sayin' as th' kessenin' next day passed off very well. I gan th' choilt away—that's what they caw godfaytherin' I think—an' they caw'd it Bess, like its mother. It skrieked a good deool when th' minister degged its face wi' cowl wayter, but I thow't he put moor on nor were needed, an' I shouldn't ha' liked it mysel'. We'd a champion tay, an' Bess were very nice. Hoo tem'd summat eaut of a bottle, wi' a goold label on, into every cup we had, which set me an' Jim talkin' like magpies, an' I tried next mornin' to think what we'd argued abeaut, but 'twere no use, I couldn't remember.

It's th' fust time I've bin a godfayther, but it's aw reet, an' if ony dacent young married couple wot has a new babby ull ax me. I'll get my white wescut weshed an' stond for um under th' same conditions.

[*Lines for a Christmas Card.*]

HO! FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

WHEN the snowflakes fall, and the drifts gather deep,
And the harsh wintry winds are hushed into sleep,
When the sun brightly shines, tho' the frost be keen,
That is the right sort of good weather, I ween,
For a Merry Christmas.

When the yule-log's ablaze up the chimney high,
And the keg is just broached, and the port tastes dry,
When the sizzling turkey is done to a turn,
And the sauce on the pudding is sure to burn—
That's the fare for Christmas.

When father comes home muffled up to the chin,
And mother shouts "Welcome!" and ushers him in,
He's quickly besieged by his girls and his boys,
For *they* know his pockets are laden with toys,
For a Children's Christmas.

When the rich man's larder is filled with good cheer,
And his books show a rise in trade for the year,
If he's thought of the hungry—cheerless and cold—
And gen'rously helped them with silver or gold,
He's a Merry Christmas.

My wishes for all on this auspicious day,
For my kindred at home and friends far away,
Is that Heaven may grant them the best of health,
And Fortune endow them with plenty of wealth,
For many a Christmas.



TH' WOMAN FRO' BURY.

A Sketch at Blackpool.

SUPPOSE most folk who enjoy fair health like a good stroll. I know I do, and one of the pleasures of my life is in walking in the early morning from the Gynn Inn along the Promenade to South Shore Fair Ground. It is, in fair weather, a glorious experience. Three-and-a-half miles along the cleanest and widest promenade in England—probably in the world—every yard of it asphalted, with no hills to climb, the ozone-laden breezes gently filling one with physical purity, is a splendid tonic indeed. Walks like that inspire one with hopes of joyful life, and are a panacea for many of the ills that afflict overworked or harassed humanity. Young people may gain strength by indulging in it; the middle-aged may take such a walk with advantage, and if the return journey should prove too much for them, the enterprise of Blackpool Corporation has provided comfortable tramcars whereon they may return, all along the coast, at a moderate fare.

When I have walked the whole length, and back to the North Shore, I generally indulge in a rest, and if I can manage it I take a seat on the form nearest to,

but south of, the North Pier. Sometimes I have to wait awhile, and when any of the sitters vacate their places it is necessary to dodge or rush quickly, as most visitors seem to favour that particular form as a resting-place. There is much to be seen about there : the crowd is so dense, the fashion of Lancashire congregate near and upon the North Pier, and there the student of the philosophy of life may see its tragedy and comedy kaleidoscopically portrayed. There the gushing maiden and her lover (temporary or otherwise) trip on light feet, she smiling sweetly at the sun-burnt talk her Adonis is pouring into her too-listening ears, each careless and fearless of the future before them ; then the aged couple, possibly on their last seaside holiday, slowly hobbling along, with little or nothing to tell each other, but remembering the days of long ago, when, with cheery hearts and lightsome feet, they joined in the revelries associated with youth. Then comes a bath chair with an invalid, probably weary of life, yet sent to the seaside by friends, who count not the cost, wishful to keep their loved one longer on earth. Here follow four or five young roysterers, without headgear, and dressed loudly, humming the refrain of a comic song they had probably heard at one of the amusement palaces the previous night. The scene has no charm for the next one who passes—a boy just merging into manhood, who is being wheeled on a stretcher carriage. He has lost his youth, his half-shut eyes lack lustre, consumption has laid a fast hold of him, and he no doubt feels dead to the world, but he is wheeled gently by his father, who is making a toil of his holiday in the hope of benefitting his boy, a parent's labour of love. Thus the interesting pano-

rama continues without cessation as long as the day lasts.

One afternoon, after a long walk, I was fortunate to secure a seat on my favourite form. The day was an ideal one: the sky bright blue, with here and there a streak of cirrus cloud, the edges of which were turned to pink as they passed over the sun, whose fierce glare reflected a phosphorescence of such varied colours upon the calm sea as to render its beauty beyond my powers of description. It was a picture not often to be seen, even at Blackpool.

I was not seated long before the heat and the sun's glare overpowered me, and I had to leave my seat. There was room for me on a form opposite, where I might escape the sun's fierce heat, which seemed to grow stronger, so I sat there—and dozed. When I had lost outward consciousness, and had, in perhaps two minutes, dreamed of pleasantries that would only fall to one's lot in a whole lifetime, I was startled by a sudden thud on the form whereon I was seated, and an exclamation that sounded like a painful long-drawn-out "Oh-o-o-o!" I rubbed my eyes and looked around. The left half of the seat had been vacated during my somnolence, for it was getting tea-time, and the only other occupant was a woman. I turned my head to the right to look at her, and she sat sideways facing, and looking straight at, me. She was a fine specimen of womanhood, with a round red face, and the day's heat had rendered necessary frequent applications of her handkerchief to keep pace with the perspiration that would otherwise have rolled off her, for her hair was plastered down on each side of her face as though her head had been dipped in oil. Yet withal, for a

matron she was not bad looking, but just now she was troubled, and her contracted countenance gave her an appearance of abject misery. And her feet troubled her; this was apparent from the manner in which, with great effort, she now and again knocked the heel of her right boot on the asphalt pavement, lifting me out of position at each savage blow. Then she would cross her right leg over the left, and give another grunt, right from the depths, which sounded "U-u-u-gh."

I became interested, and noticed that whilst she sat very close to me, her face directed towards me but staring at nothing, there was room on the right of her for another person to be seated. Possibly she expected some one—we should see. But I dozed again; I couldn't help it. In a while I was aroused by voices in altercation, and turning, saw a man of medium stature leaning on the back rest of the seat, the front part of him facing the sea. He was *her* husband, and was obviously the junior partner at home. I could tell by his attitude he was guilty of—something, but I knew not what. She told me, however, when, after expressively banging her right heel on the pavement to relieve the pain from her corn, she addressed him:

"Th' next time tha brings me to Blackpool tha'll not leove me, I know, for I'st never goo caut wi' thee again as lung as I live."

"I didn't leove thee o' purpose," he replied sheepishly, "tha' knows I only went to have a pint wi' thoose two Bury chaps—tha knows um, they sen so—an' when I coom back tha'd gone."

"Aye, an' I reckon tha went back wi' um, an' filled



The woman fro' Bury.

thy guts wi' dirty ale, whether I geet owt or nowt. It didn't matter abeaut me, did it?"

No answer being forthcoming to that pertinent inquiry, there was solemn silence for a while.

Presently two men approached. Dressed in dark tweeds, slack-back coats, and light-coloured cloth caps, their trousers were turned up at the bottoms, and they were each smoking short clay pipes. They stopped opposite me, evidently recognising their pal from Bury.

"Hello, Sam," said one, addressing the man with his back turned towards them, "we missed thee aw at once. Wheer did ta goo?"

But, whilst waiting for a reply, they caught sight of a pair of searching eyes that belonged to the woman next to me, and the spokesman, a little non-plussed, ejaculated, "Hello, Mrs. Haton, are yo' here? We didn't know yo'd come."

"Neaw, I daresay not; so yo' crack, but yo'n had him aw day, an' yo' con have him neaw. I reckon when yo' made him drunk yo' wanted to get shut on him."

"Nay, he weren't drunk when he laft us two hours sin'. He'd only had three pints. He tow'd us he'd come by hissel'."

"Did he?" she asked. "He awlus were a liar. But tak him again. I durnt want him."

The man took the clay from his mouth, and, after some hesitancy, ventured: "Well, we're gooin' to Fleetwood. We'n three heurs afore th' train goes. Will yo' booath come?"

"Nawe," she answered vehemently, as she banged her heel again on the ground to relieve the twinge of

pain from her corn, "I'st not goo; but tak him, he cares nowt abeaut me, so's he fills hissels wi' drink."

There was silence for several minutes, during which the quartette stared four different ways. Then the man who had been spokesman said: "Well, if yo' worn't come, we'll goo. Good afternoon." He was glad to get away.

At that moment there was a catastrophe like an earthquake; the form suddenly heaved, lifting me several inches in the air; the husband scooted, thinking his wife's wrath was bursting in a castigation of himself; and their acquaintances stopped and turned to see the cause of the earth's vibration and noise.

Th' woman fro' Bury had encountered her worst spell of pain from her corn, and that, coupled with her mental irritation, had caused her to bang her right heel on the asphalt with such force as to cause her to gurgle "U-u-gh" at each stroke, and everything in her vicinity to shake and tremble. She got a little ease, however, from the exercise, and her husband dared to resume his position at the back of the seat.

There was silence for quite a long while, then the man spoke: "Wilta come an' have some tay?"

"Nawe, I want no tay. I want nowt, but to get whoam. Th' next time tha axes me to come to Blackpool, or anywheer else, I'll break thi yed."

The man was cowed. After a long silence he again requested: "Wilta come an' have a drop o' gin?"

"Nawe, I'st not," was the reply, but a faint smile played round her mouth. She was winning!

"Yah do," he entreated, "tha'll be famished."

"I'st not, I tell thee again," she replied.

"Well, come an' ha' summat to eit. It's no use o' speilin' thy eaut." This he urged persuasively.

"That were speiled lung sin'," she replied bitterly, "when tha laft me to go wi' thoos drunkards. Tha didn't find *their* wives comin' wi' um. They'd moor sense."

"Well, durnt bother, lass. I'st know better next time. Come an' have summat; tha'll be ill." From the tone of his voice I wondered whether his sympathy was genuine or his fear was strong.

She uncrossed her legs, and tapped her right heel twice or thrice on the ground, so gently now as seeming to coax her corn into better behaviour, and, with a grunt lifted her stout body erect, and she followed him into Talbot Road. I saw them enter the Wine Lodge.

There was peace, but the victory was hers.





EH, BILL! COME TO BLACKPOOL.

EH, BILL, come to Blackpool! an' bring thi
 wife, Mary,
 Hoo looks fairly run deawn wi' moilin'
 through t' day;

An' bring Jack an' Nelly—that curly-nobbed fairy—
 That cowf ut hoo's gotten ull soon pass away.

It's lively just neaw—for there's crowds o' folk walkin'
 Up an' deawn th' Promenade fro' mornin' till neet;
 They're as happy as con be, lowfin' an' tawkin'—

By gum, Blackpool just neaw's a raily grand seet!

Come on to Blackpool—yo' may spend a nice hower
 In a sail fro' th' North Pier to Fleetwood an' back;
 Or a grand afternoon i' roamin' through th' Tower,
 For th' monkeys an' tigers ull please yore Jack.

Yo' may goo on to th' piers—there's skatin' an' dancin',
 Or ride to th' South Shore, an' get fun eaut o' th' fair;
 Or tak' th' childer on t' sands, an' jine i' their prancin',
 An' help um build castles—theau's built some i' th' air

Get ready: come neaw! for I've gotten a notion
 Ut a sniff o'th' briny ull do yo aw good;

An' breathin' th' ozone fro' th' owd rollickin' ocean
 Is th' reet soart o' physic to tingle one's blood.
 Yo want'en a change—maybe Fayther Time's markin'
 A notch in his stick as each yer ebbs away ;
 So pack up thi luggage, tha cannot keep warkin'—
 If tha o'erdraws Natur, tha'll have to repay.

So come on to Blackpool, yo'll never repent it,
 It's a rare bracin' place for owd folk an' young,
 This invite's i' good faith, tha'll be glad as I sent it,
 It's a good salve for dumps to mix up wi' t'thrung.
 It's a lovely sayside for rest or for pleasure,

Wi' th' waves rowlin' high or just lavin' one's feet ;
 Yo' may strowl upo' th' cliffs—get health without
 measure,

So come, an' durnt miss such a glorious treat.





ABEAUT BLACKPOOL ; AN' REAUND ABEAUT IT.

A Quire o' Nonsense—wi' Some Meeonin' in it.

RECORDS FRO' TH' "BLACKPOOL SOCIABLE
BROTHERS' CLUB."

THESE were a grand doo at th' oppenin' o'th' Sociable Brothers' Club. We'd no drink, except coffee after dinner, but there were plenty o' smookin'. When th' dinner were o'er, an' we'd gotten settled after a toast an' a sung or two, somebry started a discussion, altho' there were no ajender, an' it turned on to Blackpool, an' th' way some o'th' members went at it showed there were moor paddin' i' their yeds than some folk would give um credit for.

It started through Joe Short axin me, bein' th' fust president, "Cornt we get a better place nor this for th' Club meetins? It's so stuffy abeaunt here, one cornt get his wynt. Let's get nearer th' say."

This were a surprise to me, for we'd a deolo o' trouble i' gettiu' a reawm as would howd us, an' we weren't

very far at th' back, so for answer I axt: "Wheer would tha like us to goo?"

"Oh, annywh eer but here," he said; "let's go to th' front. Blackpool's th' ugliest teawn i'th' country, an' this is th' feawest part o' Blackpool."

A lot o'th' members yerd Joe, an' his words kindlet a fire, as th' sayin' is, an' one or another added moor coal to it till we were aw blazin' wi' excitement. Some o'th' members oppent their meawths wide enoof to catch buzzarts in, wonderin' heaw I'd answer Joe. I hardly know'd what to say, but these words were th' hondiest I could think on: "Joe, tha's gan us summat to think abeaute, but I should like to know what tha meons when tha caws Blackpool ugly. Look at th' Promenade; it's three mile lung, wi' three o'th' best terraces I know on, an' I'm sure there isn't a wider or a cleoner i'th' world. An' look what big lodgin' heauses there is on th' front."

"I weren't tawkin' abeaute th' Prom or th' lodgin-heauses at th' front, tho' I think they're moor harm nor good, for th' say air cornt get at th' back on um," Joe remarked; "I said, an' I stick to it, as Blackpool's th' feawest place I were ever in, an' I've bin to Sawford an' Manchester at that. But no place I've bin to has such narrow or cruckt streets; in no other place have I seen such lung rows o' heauses, chuckt up ony road, as yo'll find here."

"Hear, hear," sheauted Sol Hampson, an' this seemed for t' encourage Joe, for he went on:

"Blackpool's like a cracked bell; th' meawth on it is th' Promenade, an' when yo' get behind theer, yo'r lookin' for th' clapper, an' get lost i'th' cracks."

("Good again," chirped in Sol.)

“An wheer’s th’ fresh air when yo’ get in th’ teawn. Th’ streets are like entries—but entries are straight—an’ th’ heauses are so built as they keep th’ say breezes eaut o’th’ teawn instead o’ lettin’ um in. I knowd a chap an’ his wife as coom fro’ Owdham for a wick, an’ they lodged in a lung row in th’ middle o’th’ teawn. Of coorse th’ air smelled a bit sweeter even theer nor it did i’ Owdham, an’ they thowt they were gettin’ say breezes every minute. But they weren’t. They hapened to have a very weet time, an’ they had to sit in th’ heause a good deeol, but th’ chap spent his time puttin’ his hond through th’ sittin-reaum window an’ pluckin’ daisies off th’ lawn (?) o’th’ heause opposite. He said he’d enjoyed hissels’, bein’ a lover o’ flowers. When they geet whoam again, after dividin’ th’ Blackpool rock amung th’ childer, which were soon put eaut o’th’ road, th’ biggest lad went to his fayther, an’ said, “When are yo’ gooin’ to divide th’ feesh?” “What feesh?” said th’ fayther; “we’n gotten no feesh, my lad.” Th’ lad seemed doubtful, an’ he said: ‘Are yo’ sure? Yo’re Sunday clooas smell o’ feesh all o’er.’ An when th’ fayther went an’ looked at his Sunday suit th’ smell o’ feesh an’ oil nearly knockt him o’er. So, yo’ see, if he didn’t get th’ say breezes he geet th’ smell o’ feesh, nobbut it had been fried.

“Then, again, wheer is there a buildin’ i’ Blackpool ut’s worth lookin’ at. Th’ finest piece o’ architecture is that drinkin’ fountain in Talbot Square, an’ that’s made o’ iron. That’s seen at its best when th’ Salvation’s Army’s preichin’ aside on it, an’ beggin’ for pennies on th’ drum.

“But I wurn’t blame th’ present Corporation for Blackpool bein’ so ugly, but they met do better. They’n

a little bit o'th' North Shore left, but even theer they'n let some builder as wanted to make brass sharp build heauses like lung boxes, thirty in a row, an' as these goo wit' th' front o'th' cliffs, what chance is there uv onybody as lives at th' back on um gettin' ony say breezes, th' only things i' Blackpool wuth ceauntin' ? They corn't do it."

"Nawe, they corn't," sheauted Sol Hampson, "an' I con tell yo' heaw Blackpool fust come to be speiled."

"Order !" I said, an' knocked on th' table, "let Joe finish."

"I were just gooin' to finish," Joe remarked, "by sayin' as there weren't a dacent street i'th' teawn."

There were a member sittin' i'th' group as I didn't know very weel, but I'd yerd him cawd Jerry. He were a Owdham chap, but he'd coom a keepin' a company heause at Blackpool. He jumped up just as Joe Short had finished—he were sharper nor Sol—an' he said he agreed wi' Joe abeaut th' lung rows an' narrow streets, but he did know of a dacent street or two; an' he should like to tell us summat what he knowed, an' this is what he towed us.

A Dacent Street.

Said Jerry : "A yer or two back my brother Bill coom to see me, an' he stopped a tothri' days. He thowt Blackpool were a feaw place, an' I wanted to show him he were wrung. So one day I took him up Church Street on to Raikes Road, an' to th' reet o' theer there is a street or two as up to then I thowt were railly dacent an' wide, altho' they are lung rows. So we turned in one, an' a bobby stood at th' corner.

"'Good mornin',' I said to him, an' he ansert very

civil, but he said, 'Durn't make a neise gooin' deawn here, for th' folk ull complain if yo' dun.'

"So we walked on eaur tippy-toes, an' th' bobby coom wi' us. 'This street looks a bit dark,' I says to him; 'I notice it gets very little sun.' 'That's noan it,' says th' bobby, 'th' sun's not allowed to shine here; if it did, I should oather lock it up or summon it.'

" 'Well,' I axt, 'what's aw th' window blinds hauf way deawn for?' 'Oh,' he ansert, 'one o' th' wives o'th' Sultan o' Turkey deed last wick, an' they're in mournin' for her. Th' folk abeaut here are thick wi' aw th' Royal Families i'th' world.'

" 'Then they mun be very rich,' I said. 'Rich!' said th' bobby, an' he staggered wi' surprise at th' question; 'Rich! Why th' poorest mon in this street is th' Cheermon uv a Brewery!' Th' bobby spoke i' whispers.

"Just then eaur Bill turned to me quite solemn, an' said, 'Jerry, I durnt feel so weel; let's go back.' 'Aw reet, lad,' I said, an' then I tow'd th' bobby we thanked him, but we'd go back. 'Very weel,' he said, 'but durn't mak a neise.'

"He turned back wi' us, an' as we geet to th' end o'th' street a feesh cart were just comin'.

" 'Wheer art gooin'?' said th' bobby to th' chap as were wi' it. 'I'm takin' some salmon an' soles to th' lady at th' fourth heause fro' th' bottom. Hoo ordered it yesterday.'

" 'Tha cannot tak that cart deaun here,' th' bobby said, 'th' neise o' that ud freeten um to deoth.'

" 'Well, what mun I do?' axt th' chap.

" 'Why, tha mun poo thy clugs off an' carry it,' ansert th' bobby, 'unless tha likes to wait till twelve

o'clock—then there'll be two looad o' sond comin' fro' th' shore to scatter o'er th' street.'

" ' Well, but if aw wait here two heaur's th' feesh ull go bad.'

" ' Well, then,' says th' kobby, ' poo thi clugs off an' carry it.'

" ' We left um at that, an' lookin' back, we seed th' chap, in his stockin' feet, carryin' a looad o' feesh to th' lady at th' fourth heause.

" ' Well, Jerry,' said eaur Bill, ' if this is bein' a gentlemon i' Blackpool I'd rayther be i'th' jenny-gate mindin' a pair o' mules.'

" ' So would I,' I says, ' a workin' chap has summat to be thankful for, after aw.' "

* * * *

When Jerry set down everybody were lowfin' an' shakin' honds wi' him, an' some were sheautin' "Good for thee, Jerry," that there were a reg'lar tumult, as th' parson would say, so I thowt it best to adjourn th' meeting. I promised Sol Hampson, heawever, as he should be th' fust to speik th' wick after.

We'd a good muster at th' next meeting. Sol had written his lecture deaun, an' it were yezzy to see as he'd had th' dictionary at th' side on him while he were writin' it, because there were some words as I'm sure he didn't understand. But read his papper for yorsels; it's here:—

Th' Origin o' Some Nicknames, an' heaw Blackpool were Speilt.

" Afore I tell you heaw Blackpool were speilt I'st ha' to tell yo abeaunt th' peculiarities o' some Lancashire folk, an' heaw they coom to be nicknamed as

they are, for it were through th' peculiarities o' th' Blackpool folk in days gone by as Blackpool were made so ugly.

"Fust uv aw, I'll begin wi' Bowton. Afore their Teawn Ho' were built it were th' Market Square, an' there were a Fair howden there two or three times a yer. But in one corner o'th' greaund there were often a penny circus, an' awlus a set o' dobbby-horses. Thoos didn't wark by steom then, an' if a lad hadn't a haup'ny to pay for a ride he met earn one by gettin' inside o' th' roundabout an' helpin' other lads, as poor as hissel', to shuv th' horses reaund. I've done it mony a time. But there were a chap walkin' reaund eautside wi' a whip, an' if he catched a lad ridin' on th' bars, or one not shuvvin', he'd skutch him. So, wi' turnin' these dobbby-horses so sharp Bowton lads geet in th' habit o' runnin', awlus. An' th' wenches soon catcht th' complaint wi' runnin' after th' lads. Childer coom thick i' Bowton i' thoos days, an' faster nor they were wanted, an' if a lad couldn't get wark in th' teawn he'd trot off to Manchester, get a job as errand lad, an' trot off theer an' back every day, never loasin' a minute. Its nobbut twenty-four mile boath roads, but, bless yo', that were thowt nowt on. Bowton lads o' that generation were smart, I con tell yo'. I were one mysel', an' should know. So th' folk were cawd Bowton Trotters, an' th' name's stuck to um to this day.

"Similarly, as th' skoomester would say, wi' mony other places. Yahwood (but it's gradely name's Heywood), f'r instance, is called Monkeytown, an' th' rayson for that is yezzy. There were a great mon lived a while back named Darwin. He wrote a book

cawd "Th' Hevolution of Man," in which he tells us that a very, very lung while sin', afore th' history o' Blackpool were wrote, men an' women used for t' walk on their honds an' feet, an' they had hairy tails. But by-an'-by th' men begun o' wearin' collars an' women fun' eaut they looked better wi' bonnets on. So as they had to ston' up to admire thersels i'th' lookin'-glass they geet in th' habit o' walkin' on their feet. By doin' this regular their tails dropped off. Darwin cawd this hevolution. So they caw Yahwood th' Monkeytown because folk theer hasn't hevoluted yet.

(A Vice : "Shut up wi' thy lies, Sol Hampson.")

This interruption, as th' dictionary would say, were caused by Sim Nelson, who comes fro' Yahwood. He were regular mad till I explained as they were what Darwin wrote, an' not Sol's opinions. It mollified Sim a bit, but Sol were disturbed. Heaweever, order were restored, as th' reporters say, an' Sol went on :

"Likewise, when Blackpool were young, an' th' childer could play abeauf th' fields, an' breathe th' fresh air, th' sun used to shine so very breet in th' clear blue sky, that th' childer, or th' grown-up folk for that matter, couldn't stond th' brilliance, so their eyes geet wake, an' some on um begun to sken. Neaw, if ony on yo' ull stare at somebry as skens, yo'll not be lung afore yo' squint yorsel, so yo' con yezzily understood as aw th' childer soon begun to sken, an' they growed up that road. In cooarse o' time th' natives coom to be nick-named Blackpool Skenners. So, when yo' see anybody wi' a breawn face an' neck an' a gradely squint in their e'en, be sure they, or their forbears, were born in Blackpool.

A Skennin' Local Booard.

“Well, a lung time sin', afore it were big enoof for a Corporation, there were a election for t' Local Booard, an' as it turned eaut, every chap as were elected, except one, skenned badly—some wit' reet e'e, some wit' left e'e, an' t' others wi' booath. Th' chap as didn't sken were made th' cheermon, becos it were thowt he could see as things went on straight. But when they were plannin' th' streets there were such barjin amung um—some thowt they should run fro' reet to left, others thowt fro' left to reet, while thoos at squinted wi' booath e'en thowt th' plans made th' streets too wide; yo' see their vision, as th' skoomester would say, didn't stretch across a yard measure—that th' cheermon resigned, afeared he'd get skennin' too. They geet a architect an' surveyor on th' street plannin', but they booath skenned, an' th' ugly teawn o' Blackpool's a monument to th' cleverness o'th' swivel-e'ed Local Booard.

“But they were i' earnest, for amung other great things they started a Sewage Skeme, an' laid pipes i' th' streets, an' geet somewheer to empty um. But th' next election put a stop to their enterprise, for th' voters fun' eaut they were gooin to be let in for a big bill if they didn't awter things, so they chucked every skenner eaut. Th' new Booard were put in to keep th' rates deawn, an' as there weren't mich need in thoos days for a big skeme, th' matter o' sewage were shoved on one side, an' they let it stop theer.

“Neaw, as years went by, Blackpool geet fancyin' itsel', so they went in for a Corporation, wi' a gradely mayor wi' a gowd cheean reaund his neck to weight him in th' cheer, an' they geet what they wanted. After

straitenin' up things as weel as they could, an' th' population growin' so fast, they fund eaut as they'd have to do summat gradely to get shut o'th' sewage, so they said they'd finish

Th' Sewage Skeme

as were started years afore by th' Skennin' Local Booard, but they were in a mess when they fund as nobry knowed owt abeaut it. Th' skennin' architect were deead, an' th' surveyor had gone to Australia, wheer he'd gotten a job o' freetenin' rabbits, so they couldn't ax them.

"I might just say here as Blackpool folk were gettin' rid o'th' disorder o' squintin'. Wi' th' streets bein' built so narrow an' cruckt th' childer as were born could learn to walk through um witheaut bein' bothered wi' th' bonny blue sky, an' th' sun they hardly ever seed, unless they walked on th' front, so their e'en stopped as straight as when they coom i'th' world.

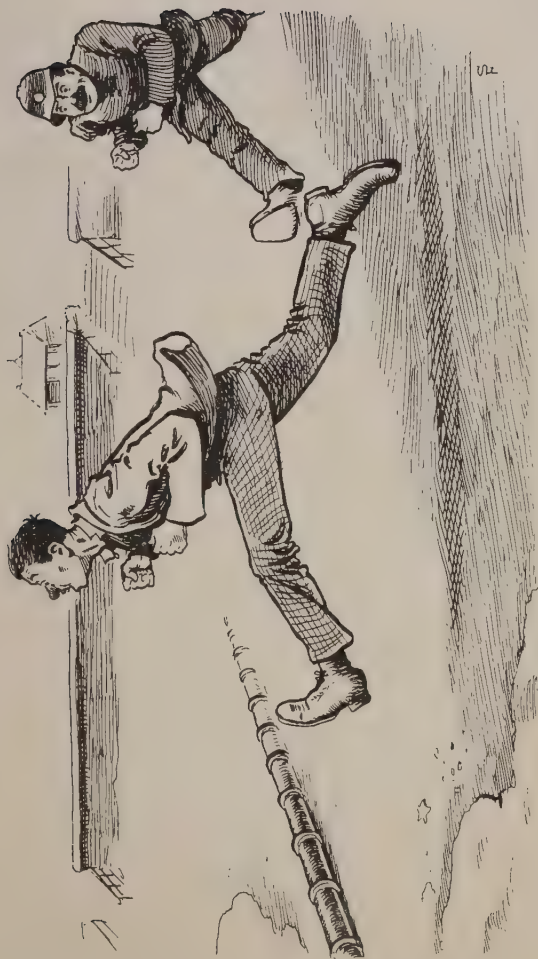
"Well, th' Corporation, as I said, were in a mess abeaut th' Sewage Skeme, an' they begun o' diggin' somewheer abeaut Marton to see if they could find any trace o'th' pipes, an' they'd build a Destructor. But they dug here an' dug theer, an' findin' nowt, were just gooin' to start a new skeme o'their own when th' pipes were fund by accident.

"A visitor fro' Sawford coom o'er for a wick. He weren't used to havin' holidays, for th' fust day he coom he geet drunk, so folk said, wi' Blackpool ale. If that were so, I'll bet a nut or two he were fond on it, for I've yerd as in thoos days there weren't a sowjer in th' British army as could sup hauf a gallon on it, an' live. I've yerd as one time th' drink sellers offered a present of a pint apiece to th' warkhouse folk for their Kesmus

dinner, an' th' Guardians thanked um for their kindness, but when th' poor paupers yerd on it they sent a letter to th' Queen axin' her to make a law to prevent th' Guardians fro' poisonin' um, an' th' Queen did. So th' beer in thoos days mun ha' bin thick an' strung. It's better neaw, I believe, but durn't sup too much on it.

"Well, this visitor were up th' next mornin' at five o'clock, walkin' abeaut th' South Shore wi' bleary e'en an' beery face, an' his tung hangin' hauf road eaut uv his meawth, lookin' an' waitin' for a pub to oppen, so as he could comfort his parched throttle. He were walkin' along th' front, an' th' tide were eaut a lung way. His brains were addled, an' his throat were lumpy, but his nose were as keen as his tung. In a bit he smelled summat, an' he knowed th' smell. 'I'm not so far off Sawford Docks, I think!' an' he sniffed hard. '*I should* know that perfume.' Then he looked toward th' say, an' he seed two hundred yards away summat trailin' in th' wayter, till it geet lost to view. He started, shaded his een, an' then he said, 'By gum, what's that? I've not seen that in Sawford; I wonder what it is.' Then he looked harder, tryin' to make it eaut, an' he thowt he seed it move. 'Why,' he said to hissel', 'it mun be th' say sarpint.' An he rushed off, lookin' for somebry else to come an' see it. He met a bobby abeaut where th' Central Pier is, an' he tow'd him what he'd seen.

"Th' bobby ansert, 'Oh, we've yerd abeaut th' say sarpint afore. Every ship as comes to Blackpool brings a tale abeaut meetin' um. Thee go whoam an' go to bed; tha'rt noan thisel' this mornin'; some sleep ull do thee good.'



A 'SAY' SARPENT.

“ ‘ Say-sarpint or not,’ th’ chap said, ‘ there’s summat theer hauf-a-mile lung, an I thowt I seed it move, but it mun be deeod, for there’s a smell comes off it. If it’s not a say-sarpint, come an’ see what it is.’

“ So they started back, an’ th’ chap’s yed were a bit clearer by this, an’ he noticed th’ bobby kept close to him, an’ bein’ a bit frettened, he started runnin’, but th’ bobby kept up wi’ him, an’ they were gallopin’ full baz when they geet to wheer th’ chap had had his nose tickled. Th’ thing were still theer, an’ after th’ bobby had stood lookin’ at it a while, an’ had a strung whiff or two off it, he clapped th’ Sawford chap on th’ back, an’ said : ‘ I’m fain theau browt me to see this, an’ I know what it is. Thoose are pipes, an’ it’s th’ Sewage Skeme built by th’ Skennin’ Local Booard. It’s bin lost for mony a yer, an’ there’s five peapund reward for th’ bobby as finds it, so I’m off to claim it.’ He started off runnin’, but when he’d gotten abeaute fifty yards he turned reaund an’ sheauted to th’ Sawford chap : ‘ It’s nobbut ten minutes off oppenin’ time. Th’ Manchester Arms is just across th’ road ; tha’ll get a pint o’ good ale theer, if there is any. Good mornin’ ; see thee again.’

“ An’ that’s th’ tale o’ heaw Blackpool fund their lost Sewage Skeme.”

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There were as much good humour when Sol set deaun as they were at th’ fust meetin’, so I said we’d meet again at th’ same time th’ wick after. Ned Nicklewood were brunnin’ to tell us summat, an’ when we met next time he gan us this tale abeaute

A Skennin’ Couple.

“ A chap once towld me uv a skennin’ couple fro’ th’

Fylde as coom to Blackpool for their honeymoon. They booath skenned, but, what were extraordinary, th' chap skenned wi' th' reet e'e, an' his wife wi' th' left, so, as they walked arm-in-arm through th' street, they stared at one another wi' one e'e beaut turnin' their yeds. They lodged at th' side o' th' big wheel. One day they lost their bearins, an' they fund thersels at th' side o'th' Hippodrome. Neaw, yo'll remember, there's hauf-a-dozen streets facin' yo' fro' theer, an' they aw lead to nowheer. Well, one peculiarity (as th' dictionary says) abeaut this couple were that their seet caused a optical delusion—[*He meant illusion—Anoch Wragg, th' compiler an' editor o' these important records*]—in each on um; f'r instance, th' wife's left e'e made everythin' look as if it were to th' reet, while her husband's reet e'e sent everythin' to th' left. As they stood at th' Hippodrome they looked for th' big wheel, an', uv cooarse, they soon seed it, but th' wife thowt it were to'art Uncle Tom's, while th' chap made it eaut to be somewheer about St. Anne's. Heawever, they started up a street opposite, an' when they geet to th' top they turned wi' th' street, an' come back to wheer they started fro'. Then they tried another street, an' followin' reaund th' corner o' that they just come back to th' Hippodrome. They went up t'other street then, an' when they'd gone up an' reaund it they were no better off. This were very disheartenin', speshally as they could see th' wheel. There were still another chance o' gettin' whoam, an' they dived deaun th' last oppenin' there were, an' this time they fund theirsels aside o'th' Police Station i' South King-street. They were gawpin' abeaut lookin' for th' road to th' big wheel when a inspector were comin' eaut

ENGLISH HISTORY.

Th' Bridegroom.



Th' Bride.



EARLY NATIVES O' BLACKPOOL. See 'th' HISTORY it's LIBRARY.

o'th' station, an' they jowd agen him. They were excited, but th' chap had sense enoof to ax th' inspector to show um th' road. Th' inspector stared at um, an' seein' two eautside e'en lookin' into his brains, while two inside uns were fixed straight on him, he thowt they were makin' faces o' purpose. They couldn't make him understand they were lost, so he took um into th' police office, an' were gooin' to lock um up for insultin' him, when th' wife started o' cryin', an' th' husband at last managed to explain as they couldn't help skennin', but they were very sorry, an' th' inspector tumblet to th' situation in a minute. So he leet um off, an' sent a bobby wi' um to th' big wheel itsel'. When they fund their diggins they were so thankful they offered th' bobby tuppence for his kindness.

“ ‘Never mind, thank yo,’ said he, for he hadn't liked th' job o' bein' wi' um ; ‘neaw as I've seen yo' whoam I'm moor nor paid. But never squint at a inspector again ; they wurn't have it. When yo' see a policeman wi' braid on his coot he's somebry—an' durn't forget it. Good day.’ ”

* * * *

When Ned had finished his tale, there were so mony members jumped up for t' say summat, that I could see we shouldn't get any forrarder, so I cawd for order, an' to keep th' fun gooin', I wund th' subjec' up like this :—

“ Joe Short's abeauteet when he says as Blackpool's speilt wi' lung rows o' heauses an' narrow streets, an' I'll tell yo' summat I yerd a while back as'll bear Joe's idea eaut. Six chaps coom o'er one Owdham Wakes, an' when they geet to th' lodgins wheer they wanted

to put up at, th' lonlady could only tak three on um, but a friend of hers as lived reet opposite fund room for t' other three. Yo' known as th' Owdham Wakes fills th' teawn as full as th' October gales fills th' wayter, so th' streets geet rayther stuffy, an' they had to oppen th' windows when they went to bed so as to be able to breathe. Of cooarse, as chaps will, they had some confab when they'd put their candles eaut, but when they were ready for sleep they couldn't catch it because everybody had lifted their windows oppen, an' everybody could yer everybody else in th' street whisperin', singing, an' snorin' till they had to get eaut o' bed one after t'other to shut th' windows, an' th' neise were as bad as bedlam. Neaw these six chaps, as I said, were billeted in two lots opposite each other—one lot at No. 16, an' t'other at No. 17. In th' mornin' a chap at 16 knocked at th' bedroom window of No. 17, an' he said to th' chap as oppend it, 'Ted, I've lost my collar stud. Han any on yo' gotten one to spare.' Ted axt um, but they hadn't one, so he went to th' window, an' said, 'Nawe, Harry, we haven't; but here'a pin; fasten thi dickey deawn wi' that.' An' he honded th' pin through th' window.

"That day happened to be a weet un, an' these chaps wanted to get abeaut, an' chance th' weet, but Ted an' Harry were teetotalers, so they let t'others goo, an' they stopped in. They geet slack for summat to do to amuse thersels durin' th' day, so they bowt a set o' chessmen. Neaw, as there were other folk, wi' childer, at booath 16 an' 17, they couldn't play in th' parlours, so they oppent th' bay windows, an' put one end o' th' chessbooard on th' window-sill o' No. 16 an' t'other end on th' sill o' No. 17. This were aw reet

for a table. They played for a lung while, an' Harry were just winning a tight game when a young chap on a bicycle come dashin' up th' narrow street. He didn't expect owt in th' road, so he run into th' chess board, an' sent one end on it tilting again' 'tother window wi' a bang that broke aw th' glass, an' nearly knocked th' frame eaut. Th' chessmen were lost, an' when th' bicycle felly coom to hiss he were on th' floor, an' he didn't look as if he wanted for t' get up. He were a butcher's lad, an' when he looked for his basket an' meit they were aw o'er th' street, an' as he gathered th' stuff up his face were as raw as th' beef. Of coorse there were a terrible row o'er it, an' thoos Owdham chaps only geet eaut on it by buying th' butcher's lad a new set o' teeth for thoos he'd knocked eaut, an' they geet th' bicycle mended for two peaund. Th' lonlord charged um fifteen shillin' for th' windows, an' th' butcher wanted compensation for th' beef bein speiled, but he geet nowt, becos they fund eaut as he sowd it for stew. Them Owdhamers awlus stop on th' front neaw, an' when any fresh visitors goo for lodgins abeaut wheer they lodged th' lonladies ax um if they play chess, an' if they say 'Aye' they wurn't have 'um."

" 'Anoch,' said Sol Hampson, 'if I'd th' button I'd pass it on to' thee.' "

" I thowt Sol were very insultin', so I said to him, rather savage, 'Sol Hampson, I durn't want thee to believe that tale, for I durn't believe it mysel, but it's time tha'd had th' button, for tha tells as mony lies as a Prime Minister. But I gan thee order, so be dacent, an' shut up while I finish.'

" That quietened him, so I finished wi' this: ' We'n

said a deeol about Blackpool, an' we agree as th' teawn is raily ugly, but we corn't help it. It's done, an' we're sufferin' for it, becos, altho' folk come for their health, th' Corporation o' Blackpool, wi' only seventy theausand folk, has to have as mony officers of health to keep th' teawn aw reet as Manchester has, an' there's hauve a million folk lives theer.

"Some day, when one or two o'th' doctors has made brass enoof to speik their minds, they'll tell us it's not healthy to build heauses in terrace fashion ; that a poor mon has as much reet to have th' wind blowing aw reaund his cottage as th' rich mon has reaund his mansion, an' th' builder as wanted to put more nor four heauses in a row should be made to swallow th' plans. I met as weel finish this by sayin' as I'd sarve th' architect as draw'd such plans up same as I'd sarve a mad dug—shoot him."

Th' members agreed wi' what I said, an' they'd sayrious faces when they left for whoam, for I'd gan um summat to think abeaut.





A BLACKPOOL AUCTION, AN' WHAT COOM ON IT.

TUM Hamer lodged wi' his brother Alick, who were wed an' had two childer. Emmer Hamer, Alick's wife, thowt awmust as much o' Tum as hoo did uv her husbond, becos Tum were a mon o' few words, an' were yezzily managed a whoam. He were quite happy when he'd done his day's wark, if he could lie deaun on th' sofy, after his baggin', wi' a book, or goo eaut for a walk wi' their Alick, which just pleosed Emmer, for hoo knowed as Alick, who were rayther lively, were eaut o' mischief when Tum were abeaut. Nayther o' th' chaps had other companions; they were quite content one wi' th' tother. Last Wakes time Tum an' Alick agreed to go to Blackpool for th' wick eend, becos Emmer didn't feel fit to leove Bowton, as th' childer were gettin' reaund fro' th' mayzles, an' hoo couldn't trust nobry else wi' um. Th' chaps booath had mules at th' same mill, an' on th' Friday neet they started eaut wi' leet hearts for th' shop wheer th' say breezes an' th' ozone's sowd. I say sowd, an' I meon sowd, for yo' connot get um for nowt. Durn't try, or yo'll be sowd. Well, they geet good lodgins, an' after a quiet evenin' abeaut th' teawn

they turned in early to have a full day on th' Saturday. They geet up betimes, an' after breakfast they seet eaut for a good day's seet-seein'. They enjoyed it raily weel till abeaut three o'clock, when it coom on rainin' very hard. They'd noather top cooats nor umbrells, so they had to run somewheer for shelter. I' this road they geet separated, as they went different roads. I durn't know wheer Alick, th' wed un went, but as th' tale consarns his brother we mun follow him.

He yerd a auction chap's hammer bangin' on a booard, an' lookin' in th' shop, he seed as th' sale were gooin' to start. He thowt he might as weel shelter theer, an' have th' fun for nowt, an' watch other sawneys as wanted bargains an' get summat gan un waste their brass. That's what *he* thowt, an' there were a lot moor i'th' reaum nussin' th' same belief, but these auctioneers who come to Blackpool in th' summer know summat, an' if yo see one wi' a reaum full o' bargain hunters tryin' to get th' best on him watch heaw he lowfs at um at th' finish, for he's gotten th' best bargain. These wanderin' auctioneers creawd into th' watterin' places fro' July to September—Blackpool has aboon its share on 'um—an' they tak' as much brass eaut o'th' teawn as keeps um for th' rest o' th' year. This is bad two roads: it's not fair to th' shopkeepers who live in th' place, an' have to squeeze thro' th' tight winter as best they con; an' it's bad for those who are so greedy as to want summat for nowt, altho' I sometimes think, when I yer on um being sowd, that it sarves um reet. An', another thing as I've noticed, wheer do aw those foreign watches get to, as are sowd by those auction chaps? They're mooast on um bowt by trade union men. I reckon they're gi'n to th' childer to play wi',

when th' buyers find eaut what rubbish they are. There's mony a theausand o' these sowl every yer in Blackpool, an' if other sayside places sell um i'th' same proportion, I'm of opinion as we British folk 'ud better waste eaur brass on findin' eaur own a job nor givin' it to furriners who durn't pay eaur rates an' taxes.

But I mun get on wi' my tale.

Tum Hamer went in th' auction reaum, as I said. Th' auctioneer had just gotten his sale gooin', an' havin' a lot o' gee-gaws to dispose on, as bait to catch th' sawnies, he put up th' next lot like this :—

“ Ladies an' gentlemen, I am goin' to show you how little I care for money. See this penknife, best Sheffield steel blades, rivetted through the head and foot, stag horn sides, with nickel-silver plate on which to engrave your name. Now, who will give a penny for it.”

“ Me,” sheauts a chap.

“ Right, sir, here you are,” an th' chap geet it.

“ Here's a purse, best Russian leather, patent spring clasp, with silver-plated engraved corners, suitable for either a lady or gentleman. Its value is two-an'-six. My bid's a penny : who says tuppence.”

Every woman in th' reaum shouted “ Tuppence.”

“ Thank you. That lady there, Isaac ” (that were to th' chap as helped him), an' he honded th' purse to th' best-dressed woman in th' reaum, an' who were likely to be his yezziest victim.

“ I'm sorry I have no more,” said th' auctioneer ; “ but these little oddments are of no use to us.” Then he rapped on th' table wi' his hommer, an' folk as were passin' stopped to look, an' others comin' in, th' shop

were full in no time. Then he raised his v'ice, an' filled um wi' stuffin like this :--

"The firm I represent, ladies an' gentlemen, is one of the largest in England. They manufacture most of the goods I sell, and they own one of the richest mines in Africa. The governor says to me, 'Mr. Goldstein, you are going among Lancashire folk. They're honest and straightforward, so treat them as such, and, as we have got large surplus stocks, let the good people have bargains.' Bargains! Bargains!! Yes, and I am here to give them to you. Now, here's a pipe. Any gentleman wanting a good cool smoke can't have a better. Best briar, amber mouthpiece, solid silver-mounted and capped at the top to prevent burning. My bid's a penny." Somebry sheauted tuppence, an' he knocked it deawn.

Then he browt some breast pins eaut, an' he spotted Tum Hamer. "You've forgotten," said he, "to place a pin in your neck tie this morning. Will you allow me to present you with this rolled-gold horseshoe pin; it will bring you good luck." An' he stuck th' pin in Tum's tie. "An' you, sir," to another chap, an' in this road he gan' hauf a dozen away. Then he browt tothri brooches eaut, an' gan' um to th' women.

Folk by this time were getten in a good humour, an' as that were what th' auctioneer had been warkin' for he were moor than pleased wi' hissel'. But he hadn't done wi' um yet. After a joke or two, he went on :

"Now, ladies an' gentlemen, I'm goin' to show you a little feat. I've told you why my firm has sent me here; but they wouldn't have sent me if I weren't able to conduct their business in a straightforward and honourable manner. I am going to put up twenty



LOOKIN' FOR BARGAINS.

articles—Here, Isaac (to his mon) bring me that tray—an' I'll undertake to clear the lot in half-an-hour, an' everybody shall be satisfied. Are you satisfied, sir?" That were to th' chap as bowt th' penknife for a penny. "Oh, aye," said th' chap. "And are you satisfied, lady?" to th' woman as geet th' purse. "I'm aw reet," she ansert wi' a blush. "That's right," said th' auctioneer. Then he drawed his cuffs back, sent his fingers through his yure, and raisin' his v'ice, he sheauted, "Yes, ladies an' gentlemen, I'll sell the articles I'll put on this tray in thirty minutes, or I'll present your local hospital with a hundred pounds.—*[They sen that every yer, but th' treasurer uv eaur local hospital is waitin' for th' fust hundred yet.—Anoch.]* Here's a lady's handbag, No. 1," said he, an' he put other things on th' tray till he geet to nineteen.

"How many's that, Isaac," he said to his mon.

"Nineteen, sir," said Isaac.

"I thought there were twenty," said th' auctioneer, "but never mind. Here's a gentleman's watch, jewelled in nine holes, double capped, centre balance, eccentric action, solid gold, worth ten pound—worth ten pound!—but it will have to be sold. But I'll tell you what I'll do: to encourage you, this beautiful tea and coffee service, and this nickel-silver tea tray, shall be given away, without money and without price—(Hold it up, Isaac, an' let them all see it).—That will be absolutely given away. To encourage you to help me to get through in time, every person who buys an article will receive a ticket, and the lady or gentleman who has most tickets when the twenty articles are sold will receive this most handsome present for nothing"—

here he raised his v'ice again—"this handsome tea and coffee set positively for nothing!"

Th' folk in th' reaum were fairly bewildered (like th' flies in a traycle can) at this mon's kindness, an' they stared at one another wi' their meauths wide oppen, an' each on um made up their mind to have that tay and coffee set, but they said nowt. When th' auctioneer had gi'n um time to shut their meauths again, he started :

"Now, here's a handsome silver-backed hair brush and comb ; pure Potosi silver. How much ?"

"Three shillin'," somebry sheauted.

"Thank yo'," he said, an' his lip curled up. "Go on."

"Four shillin'," fro' a woman.

"Thank yo', lady ; go on again."

"Five." "Six."

"Six an' threepence," fro' Tum Hamer.

"No, I won't take threepenny bids," said th' auctioneer. "Six shillings; any advance. Going."

"Six an' sixpence," fro' a corner o'th' reaum.

"Who'll say seven. Be quick, please."

"Seven shillin'," sheauted Tum Hamer.

"Seven ; going at seven. Going ——."

Then th' hommer dropt, an' Tum Hamer geet th' brush an' comb an' a papper ticket wi' number 1 on it. That brush an' comb met be worth two shillin'.

"Now, here's a pair of opera glasses worth thirty-five shillings. Special double-crystal lens ; will carry twenty-eight miles ; suitable for a captain of a ship, a general on the battle-field, a sportsman at the races, or a lady at the opera. Who'll start me at five shillings ?"

Nobry seemed to want a opera glass. Then he spotted Tum Hamer. "You bid five shillings, sir, an' it shan't cost you five shillings." Tum hesitated. "Go on, sir, say five shillings," an' Tum bid five. He knocked it deaun to him, and when he honded it deaun there were a fancy fountain pen wi' it. "There," said th' auctioneer, "I told you they shouldn't cost you five shillings. That fountain pen is worth ten shillings." Tum believed him, but it were nobbut wuth sixpence.

An so th' sale went on. Tum bowt, amung other things, a pair o' Marley horses, a kitchen clock, a lady's handbag, a watch an' cheean, hauf-a-dozen knives an' forks, an' summat else, an' awtogether he'd seven tickets, an' he'd spent o'er three peaund. Then th' auctioneer had sowd nineteen articles, an' he'd above ten minutes to spare. So he leoned on th' bench, an' said, "All you who have got tickets hold up your hands." They did as he axed um, an' he said to Tum Hamer, "How many have you, sir?"

"Seven," answered Tum.

"Well, I'm going to reward you for your pluck. Here's five shillings for you." Tum took it, an' thanked him. "Five shillin' an th' best chance o'th' tay an' coffee service," thowt Tum; "this is better nor warkin'." Th' auctioneer then gan' a bit o' brass to th' tothers as had gotten tickets, an' as they didn't expect owt o'th' soart they were mighty pleased wi' theirsels, an' were sure th' auctioneer were very rich an' extra kind. But he'd hardly done wi' um yet.

"Now, ladies an' gentlernen," said th' auctioneer, "we come to the twentieth lot, an' I've about nine minutes in which to sell it. This solid eighteen-carat rolled gold hunter watch, capped an' jewelled, regu-

lator balance, real lever, is valued at fifteen guineas, but I don't expect to get its value here. You've helped me very well, so this is to be the best bargain, and the last of the sale this afternoon. Who'll start me at five pounds." There were no answer to this, an' th' auctioneer tried again.

"Will anybody say three pounds?" No answer.

"Well, see here," he went on, "this shan't keep me much longer. I'll tell you what I'll do: The person who is fortunate enough to get this solid eighteen carat rolled gold watch shall go away satisfied, so give me a start. I'll give to the purchaser of it fifteen tickets for the free gift of this magnificent tea an' coffee set."

There were a dropping o' jaws when he said this, for Tum Hamer an' another chap wi' seven tickets apiece made sure nobry else ud come near um, an' they'd have to toss up for th' tay an' coffee set. Tothri chaps i'th' reaum as ud bowt nowt lowft a bit, but selfish folk awlus do when they think yo'n bin had.

Well, th' biddin' started at a sovereign, then somebry said two peaund, an' th' biddin' run up to five peaund, when th' auctioneer knocked it deaun to a woman. Hoo tow'd somebry near her hoo weren't wed, an' no sign o' bein', but I reckon hoo thowt if hoo bowt a hunter hoo might run deaun a chap as quarry, an' he'd wed her.

* * * * *

Tum Hamer gathered his stuff up, an' it were too much for t' carry under his arm, so he put it at front on him like a big drum, an' marched off to his diggins. When Tum geet theer Alick were havin' his tay, an' he oppent his e'en when he seed th' donkey-load o'

stuff Tum had browt. "Whereever hasta bin, an' what hasta gotten theer?" he axed.

"Why, when I lost thee I went in a auction-reaum to get eaut o'th' weet, but I'm a bit too dry neaw, an' I reckon I'st have to be so till I get whoam."

"What dosta meon by bein' dried up?" axed Alick.

"Nowt; only I'm spent up wi' gooin' in yon auction reaum. I'st have to borrow a peaund off thee till we get whoam."

"Borrow a peaund off me! I haven't one; it's moor nor I had to come wi'! I shouldn't ha' come but for keepin' thee company. Tha' knows I've four folk to find grub for, an' tha's only thisel', an' tha gets as much wage as me. Eaur Emma tow'd me tha wanted me to come, an', as hoo'd nowt to spare, hoo said tha'd lend me what I were short on."

"If I'd known that I shouldn't ha' gone in," Tum said sadly.

Alick looked at th' stuff on th' table, an' then axed, "Heaw mich hasta spent on these things?"

"Abeaut four peaund, but its chep. I've just six bob left," was Tum's reply.

"Well, that caps aw!" said Alick. "We corn't stop here till Monday afternoon wi' empty pockets. What's to be done?"

"I durn't know," ansert Tum, scrattin' his yed. "We'st ha' to go whoam to-neet, I reckon."

This seet um booath thinkin', an' after a bit Alick spoke: "Well, it's a good job I'm wed, for a chap larns by that heaw to get eaut o' mony a scrape. Th' best thing we can do ull be to caw th' lonlady in, an'

ax her if ho'll buy some o' that stuff off thee. Happen hoo will, if tha'll let her have a bargain."

A Chat wi' th' Lonlady.

So they cawd Mrs. Smith in, an Alick tow'd her what a foo their Tum had made uv hissel' at th' auction reaum by spendin' aw th' brass he had, an' axed her if hoo'd buy th' pair o' bronze Marley horses an' a marble clock.

"Eh, nawe!" hoo sheauted; her face gooin' red in a minute; "I want nowt o' that sort. I wouldn't ha' such rubbitch as that i'th' heause. I've seen it afore, an' so has every lonlady in Blackpool. Neaw an' again a felly comes here, as shouldn't leove whoam beaut a woman for t' tak care on him, an' he gets in one o' thoose auction-rooms, an' lets um kid him to part wi' aw he has, an' when he comes to his lodgins he be-thinks him he hasn't enoof laft to pay his road."

"But," said Alick, "we'st not owe yo' so much if we stop till Monday, an' if we goo whoam to-neet my wife ull have a fit. We'st ha' to tak um to th' pawnshop if yo' worn't have um, that's aw."

"Well, tak um," said Mrs. Smith, "an' yo'll find there's no pawnbroker in Blackpool ull have owt what's come fro' th' summer auction-rooms."

"Heaw's that?" axt Tum. It were th' fust time he'd spoken.

"Why, becos they're worth nowt. Heaw much hasta gan for th' Marley horses, an' th' clock as win-nat goo?" axt Mrs. Smith, after that saucing.

"Twenty-eight shillin', said Tum.

"Twenty-eight shillin'!" an' Mrs. Smith were a while afore hoo could tak her breath. "They're not

worth hauf on it ; they're only painted tin. I durn't want um," an' hoo were beauncin' eaut o'th' reaum when Alick cawd her back.

"Will yo' lend us a peaund on um, an' we'll send yo' th' brass for um when we get back?" pleaded Alick.

"Nawe, I'st not!" said Mrs. Smith, "they're not worth it. I'll land yo' six shillin' on th' lot ; but if I do it'll have to goo to'rds what yo'll owe me, an' I think yo'd best pay me neaw, an' then I'st be sure yo' corn't goo in th' auction-room again."

Alick didn't like this, becos he'd had nowt to do wi' it, but he put th' best face on it he could. "Well, if that's th' best yo' con do, we'st ha' to agree," he said, "but yo'll let us ha' th' goods back for six shillin' if we send it yo' when we get back?"

"Of cooarse I will, an' be glad to get shut on it," ansert Mrs. Smith." If I were yo, I'd shuv um into a' auction awhoam, particularly th' clock, or else it'll leg yo' deaun. When we fust coom here a young chap were stoppin' wi' us an' he did just as yo'n done to-day—he wasted aw he'd gotten. Among th' tackle he browt in were a clock just like this. [But I'll sit me deaun while I tell yo' this—Umph! Theigh-ur! That's better.] Well, we wanted a clock, so my husbond felt sorry for th' lad, an' we bowt it at hauf th' price he'd gan for it. That looked like a bargain, didn't it? Well, wait a bit. We seet it gooin' by th' Teawn Ho' clock, an' we went to bed for th' lungest neet's sleep we ever had. It lost abeaut forty minutes in th' hower, an' turned to-morrow into yesterday. My husbond wakkened at three by th' clock, an' it were too early for t' get up, so we had another snooze, an'

we were wakkend by th' rattlin' o' milk cans. He geet up then, an' th' clock struck eight, but when he went to oppen th' dur for th' milk, th' chap said, 'Do yo' want any extra to-neet? I couldn't make yo' yer when I knocked this mornin'. 'Goodness me,' said my husbond, an' he oppent his e'en wider an' felt if th' bit o' yure he wore on his nob were still theer, 'what time is it?' Th' milkmon looked at his watch, an' said, 'Why it's ten minutes past four i' th' afternoon.' It were no use him puncin' that clock up an' deaun th' room, but he did, an' to save his toes I picked it up an' throwed it in th' ash-bin. But my husbond welly geet sacked, an' th' teawn were flooded two days through that clock."

"It were a pity yo' bowt th' clock," said Alick.

"It were that, an' th' visitor we geet it fro' went off whoam th' day he sowd it to us, or else eaur Daniel would ha' brokken his neck."

"Um. What did yo'r husbond do, Mrs. Smith?" axed Alick.

"Oh, he were a tide-turner for th' Corporation," hoo ansert.

Tum had been listenin' to this talk wi' his meauth oppen, but he'd never yerd of a trade like that afore, so he axed her, "What is a tide-turner?"

"Why," said Mrs. Smith, "he's a chap as watches th' tides come in, an' when it gets as high as th' Corporation wants it to goo, th' tide-turner turns th' wayter off, an' th' tide goes eaut. If yo'll notice in some o'th' shop windows there's a fresh papper in every day sayin' heaw high th' tide ull be, an' th' Corporation wurn't allow it to get any higher."

"Well, I never yerd nowt like that," said Tum.

“Yo’ larn moor as yo’ talk to folk. Is yo’r husbond tide-turnin’ yet, Mrs. Smith?”

“Eh, nawe,” said Mrs. Smith, “he’s been deod above five yer. He deed at Simblin’ Sunday, nineteen-hundert-an’-one.”

“Poor chap!” said Alick, “what a pity.”

“Aye, it were,” an’ Mrs. Smith seemed pleased at th’ sympathy, for hoo’ lifted th’ corner uv her white brat up an’ wiped a tear fro’ her left e’e; “as good a mon as ever lived, an’ he wouldn’t cruush a worm.”

Mrs. Smith were very much affected, an’ that e’e wheer th’ tears coom fro’ were soppin’ weet, an’ a corner uv her brat wanted squeezin’ when hoo’d talked a bit. But hoo liked dwellin’ on her trouble.

There was a little pause just here, then Mrs. Smith said, “I’ll show yo’ his memory card, an’ I’ll bring yo’r bill at th’ same time.”

When hoo’d turned her back, Tum said to Alick, “Dosta think yon woman’s truthful? Hoo’s gan us plenty o’ gas for th’ six shillin’ hoo’ll strap us. An’ I noticed when hoo were troubled an’ cried abeaut her husbond th’ tears aw coom fro’ one e’e.”

“Well, I noticed that mysel’,” said Alick, “but lonladies at th’ sayside are that road; they keep one e’e wi’ a tear or two ready for sympathy, but they keep t’other e’e awlus dreigh for business purposes. Watch her when hoo comes back, an’ tha’ll catch her winkin’.”

Alick had hardly gotten th’ words eaut uv his meauth when he yerd th’ seaund uv her feet. Hoo coom in, an’ planked hersel’ deaun on a cheer. “Here’s my

husbond's memory card. Mun' I read it yo'?" an' witheaut waitin' for a answer, read it like this:—

IN LOVIN' MEMORY OF
DANIEL EBENEZER NATHAN SMITH,
Who, after a troublous life,
Left his home an' left his wife,
AN' DEED APRIL FUST, NINETEEN-UGHT-ONE.

Th' owd brid's flown away fro' th' nest,
He's flown to heaven to get some rest;
If he'd fly back I'd have nowt to fear,
For I'd all as I wanted when he was here.

"Th' po'thry's mine," said Mrs. Smith, proudly; "dun yo' like it?"

"Aye," replied Alick, wishin' to cooart her favour, "it's very good."

That were th' answer hoo wanted, so hoo went on, "I put it in th' papper, an' when I axed him heaw mich it would be, th' gentlemon behind th' ceaunter said, 'Well, eaur usual price is four shillin', but this po'thry's so good we'll put it in at half price.' So I paid him, and bid him Good-day, when he said 'Yo' should goo in for writin', Mrs. Smith, an' if any o' yore friends dee, if yo'll write a verse as good as this, I'll put it in th' papper at th' same price.' . . Would yo' like a memory card?"

"Aye, we should," ansert Alick, "we want summat o' that soart to cheer us up just neaw."

"Well, then, tak this," an' hoo honded it to him. Hoo shaped for leovin' um then, but rememberin' hersel', turned back, an' said, "I'd liked to ha' forgotten; here's yo're bill."

Alick took it, an' read: "Bed, three neets, 7s. 6d.; cruet, 6d.; milk, 6d.; pratoes, 6d.; boots, 9d.; Sunday's



"w'en used nowt but a bit o' sawt." sed Alick.

dinner for two, 3s. ; total, 12s. 9d." This awmost made him sweat, not as it were dear, but he thowt o' th' funds. "I see yo'n gotten sixpence deaun for th' cruet, what does that meen?"

"It's for th' mustard, saut, alecar, an' pepper," said Mrs. Smith.

"But, we'n used nowt but a bit o' saut," Alick said.

"Well, it's bin theer for yo'," replied Mrs. Smith; "when Selina, th' servant, took th' cruet off th' table this mornin', she said, 'Mrs. Smith, yon two chaps come fro' Cheshire, wheer th' cheese is made. They'n not touched th' mustard.'"

"But we durn't come fro' Cheshire," broke in Tum, "we come fro' Bowton."

"Dun—yo!" she said, surprised; "well, well; yo're th' fust Bowton chaps I've ever had stoppin' here as didn't empty th' mustard pot th' fust meal. . . That accounts for it; tha'd ha' never gone to yon auction reaum if tha'd etten some mustard."

Just then th' servant browt Tum's tay; he were nearly famished, for Mrs. Smith's chatter had kept him waitin', an' seaside lonladies aren't awlus in a hurry, unless th' heause is full; then they want some on yo' eaut o'th' road.

Alick an' Tum discussed th' bill, an' they clubbed together, an' cawd Mrs. Smith in. They paid her, an' they'd one-an'-ninepence left to carry um on till Monday afternoon.

"I hope yo're satisfied," said Mrs. Smith, sittin' deaun facin' Tum, "an' yo'll come again. An' yo'll send for th' ornaments when yo' get back. Happen tha'll be wed by then." (This were to Tum, an' he blooshed). "When my husbond were livin' he used to

goo eaut recitin', an' when he went to a tay party, wheer there were young folk, they'd awlus sheaut for him to say 'Th' Lines to a Bachelor.' It met ha' bin writ for thee. It were his own po'thry, an' they did like it. I'll say it for yo'." An' hoo brasted off wi' this:—

Why, foolish mon, doesn't tha get wed?
Tha'd be better off if tha were dead,
Nor livin' sangle;
There's mony a lass would be thi wife,
An' comfort thee aw through thi life,
An' never wrangle.

Art' not tired o' livin' so,
I'th' midst o' misery an' woe,
Aw thi days?
Tha'd rayther awter, I con tell,
But tha'll trust nobody but thisel',
Tha's such quare ways.

Tha never knowed affection's bliss,
Or th' love contained in one sweet kiss,
Not tha indeed;
Tha coom i'th' world for t' do some good,
An' not be like a block o' wood,
Or some bad weed.

Tha's no wife's cheer for t' make thee glad,
Or little childer t' caw thee dad,
An' comfort thee;
An' so, wi' awlus bein' alone,
Tha does nowt neaw but sigh an' moan,
An' thus tha'll dee.

If tha were sick, neaw what would t' do?
Tha'd happen have to th' warkheause goo,
An' risk thi life;
An' who would soothe thi achin' yed,
Or keep thee warm at neet i' bed,
As well's a wife.

In times like thoose hoo'd be thi friend,—
 Her labours then would ha' no end,
 Till tha gct weel ;
 Tha'd find tha'd not geet wed in vain,
 For hoo'd be th' fust to soothe thi pain—
 Thy sores to heal.

Tha'rt not like folk we see aw reaund ;
 Thi misery poos thee deaun to th' greaund,
 An' makes thee ill ;
 Just get a wife thi path to cheer,
 An joys ull creawn thee while tha'rt here—
 Tha'll ha' thy fill.

Tha looks so sour tha fretens folk—
 Thi face weren't made to crack a joke,
 It looks too feaw ;
 I think it hasn't wore a smile,
 Or lowft or grinned for mony a while—
 Has it neaw ?

Such folk as thee owt ne'er be born ;
 Folk pity thee, tha looks forlorn,
 Ah! that's quite true ;
 Neaw just thee wed some bonny lass,
 Hoo'll tend thee well an' save thi brass—
 Tha'll never rue.

Women pints at thee wi' shame—
 " Theer's a bachelor!" what a name
 For any mon ;
 Neaw tak' advice afore its late,
 An' goo an' get a gradely mate—
 I know tha' con.

Thi troubles then will have an end,
 For hoo'll be to thee a worthy friend,
 I know hoo will ;
 For woman's worth is in her breast,
 An' everythin' hoo schames for th' best,
 Wi' her skill.

"That's th' eend on it," said Mrs. Smith; "dus ta like it."

"It's very good," said Alick; "han' yo' a copy on it to spare."

"Nawe, I haven't, it's not been printed; but I'll write it eaut for thy brother if he likes," an' hoo looked at Tum wi' one o' thoose fause smiles as th' sex larn when they're babbies an' practice till they dee.

Tum seed through it, but he'd listened to th' po'thry, an' some on it had settled in his nob, as we shall yer moor abeaut. He stretched his arms eaut, an' gaped, an' said to Alick, "Let's have a bit uv a walk. We'st see nowt sittin' here."

"Aye, do," said Mrs. Smith; "an' I'd forgotten, I've some marketin' to do."

Heaw they Managed beaut Brass i' Blackpool.

When Alick an' Tum geet in th' street they felt lonely someheaw, an' they kept their honds in their pockets to howd that one-an'-ninepence deaun. They walked past th' Palace an' th' Tower mony a time on th' spec o' seein' somebry fro' Bowton as they knowed to borrow a tothri shillin' off, but, as generally happens at such times, nobry o' that soart passed. They hadn't spokken to one another aw th' time, an' noather on um knowed wheer they were gooin'. Abeaut ten o'clock they were feelin' hungry, but there were some schamin' to be done afore they dare touch their capital. They were passin' a shop wheer there were potato pie in th' winder, steamin' hot, when th' nice smell pood um up.

"I'm hungry," said Alick, "an' I mun ha' summat to eit."

"Aw reet," said Tum, "let's ha' fourpennorth o' prato pie apiece," an' they went in. It were good, they thowt, an' they could ha' eaten a lot moor but for th' funds bein' low. They'd only tharteenpence left.

Alick bethowt him on th' road whoam as his bacca were done, an' as Tum had noan to spare, he had for t' spend threepence on an ounce o' twist, an' that laft um wi' tenpence.

"Th' brass is fairly flyin'," said Tum ; "I'm feared we'st ha' to goo whoam to-morn."

"Well, we cornt help it," replied Alick ; "I've pent nowt ; it's thee to blame."

"Well, it's my own brass," said Tum, "surely I con do as I like wi' my own."

Alick said no moor, for he could see as Tum were a bit nettled, an' if he hinted again perhaps they'd have words. So they went whoam, an' were not lung eaut o' bed.

On th' Sunday mornin' at breakfast time they had to plan heaw to spend th' day. They were booath good livin' chaps, if they weren't teetotalers, so Alick said to Tum :

"We daren't go to chapel, becos we corn't afford to put owt in th' collectin' box. Heaw would it be if we spent th' day on th' sands. We can yer th' preitchin' theer, an' it's only place as I know on wheer we con get religion for nowt."

Tum could think o' nowt better, an' abeaut ten o'clock they were stondin' aside o'th' Salvation Army, listenin' to th' band an' tothri testimonies. They'd gotten so interested as to be thinkin' abeaut nowt else, when a young woman wi' a poke bonnet started collectin' just wheer 'lum were stondin'. Hoo offered th'

box to him th' very fust, an' he couldn't forshame to let it pass, so he put a penny in. Alick twigged her comin', an' he backed eaut o'th' creawd for a bit. After bein' theer a while longer, th' captain cocked th' big drum on its end in th' middle o'th' ring, an' as they'd seen that done afore, they knowed what it meant. They'd nothin' moor to spare, so they went away.

After dinner they turned eaut again, but they kept clear o'th' Salvation Army. They went to another stond, but they were no better off, for th' cadgin' begun theer, so they edged off to another place, an' feared uv a collection, they kept eautside o'th' crowd. They spent moor time in dodgin' th' collectin' box nor what they geet good fro' aw th' sarmons they'd yerd.

Monday mornin' were raily grand, such a day as would make a healthy chap feel as he'd like to live for ever.

"I wish it were four o'clock," Tum remarked, as they were havin' their breakfast.

"What for?" axed Alick. "If we'd a bit o' brass I could do wi' bein' here a month. Look what a bonny mornin' it is."

"Th' mornin's aw reet," said Tum, "but what can we do wi' ninepence between us, an' th' lonlady pooin' such faces as hoo does. We met be beggars."

"Oh, tak no notice uv her," said Alick, "tha doesn't know women as weel as I do. It's thy fancy; I fund her aw reet. Perhaps she thinks tha'rt a foo', an' I corn't blame her."

"Well, I feel it keen enoof, Alick Hamer, an' I durn't think tha's any reason to fancy I'm gooin' to be insulted wi' thee," an' Tum were riled.

"I didn't meen to insult thee, Tum," said Alick,

"but tha' imagines things. Mrs. Smith's aw reet, but hoo tow'd thee plain enoof as chaps as coom beaut their wives or wenches did make foos o' theirsels be-times."

"Well, drop it, she said enoof; durn't thee bother any moor abeaut it."

Alick had sense enoof to say no moor, an' after a bit, when his temper had cooled deaun, Tum axed, "Wheer mun we spend th' mornin'?"

"Well, I think we'd better goo on th' North Pier, that'll nobbut be fourpence for booath on us. We con sit an' yer th' band, an' there's no collectin'."

That were Alick's suggestion, an' Tum readily agreed.

They spent th' mornin' theer, sittin' smookin' an' listenin' to th' music, but at th' interval Tum said to Alick, "I could do wi' a sup o' ale, but there's only fivepence left. Heaw con we manage it?"

"There's only one road I con think on," ansert Alick; "we'll go to th' refreshment pavilion together. Thee order a glass uv ale, an' sup hauf on it; then come eaut. I'll watch thee, an' then nip in, an' sup what tha's left. We'st ha' to do it that road, an' then we'st have twopence-hau'p'ny left for two gills when we get to Bowton."

An' they did this. It weren't very much ale for two strung men, but it livened um up a good deal; it left a thirst behind it, heawever, so as when th' concert were o'er they had to goo to th' bar again an' spend th' last coppers they had, joinin' at th' beer as they did afore.

* * * * *

Blackpool stations are welly awlus creawded in th'

summer, an' there isn't much difference between th' folk as are comin' in an' thoose at are gooin' away. They aw seem happy. Folk that are gooin' whoam have friends seein' um off, an' they're merrily chattin' while th' barriers are oppend. Then they shake honds, an' th' friends ull say, "We're sorry yo're gooin'," an' they awlus get ansert, "An' we're sorry to go; but, ne'er mind, we'st come again next yer!" An' they keep their word. Then when th' train leoves th' station they wave their honkerchers eaut o'th' carriage windows to their friends, an' smile at um till they con see um no longer. Then they sit deaun an' joke an' sing all th' road whoam. Th' fresh air's made um lively an' strung. They dunnat forget th' pleasure they'n had, an' as th' months rowl reaund they keep filled wi' th' pleasant hope of another good time to be spent in th' jolliest place in England, wheer anythin' con be bowt, an' wheer there's no restriction on anybody's liberty so long as folk behave. Good, cheery Blackpool, awlus young, an' fresh every time one comes to it!

Alick an' Tum geet to Talbot Road Station in good time, an' they were th' only deaunhearted pair in th' creawd. When th' barriers oppend they made for th' train, an' geet a compartment to theirsels at fust, an' Alick stood at th' window as folk coom through th' barrier.

"Why, here's Jane Barnes, thy big piecer, wi' Alice Atherton, an' David Strung an' his wife," he said to Tum, who geet up to look.

"Hello, Dave," said Tum, "heaw arta? When did yo' come?"

"Oh, I'm A 1," ansert Dave; "we'n bin here aw wick. Han yo' reaum for us in theer?"

“Aye,” said Tum, “come in.”

When th’ dur were oppent, Jane Barnes an’ Alice Atherton had gotten to th’ carriage, an’ Alick said as there were reaum, so they geet in, an’ they’d compartment to thersels. Jane Barnes sat next to Tum, an’ Alice Atherton next to her, while Alick an’ Dave an’ his wife sat on th’ opposite side. Tum were pleased wi’ this arrangement, for thoos lines in Mrs. Smith’s doggerel—

“There’s mony a loss ud be thi wife,
An’ comfort thee aw through thi life,”

had been runnin’ through his yed since hoo said um, an’ for th’ fust time in his life he were interested in women’s company.

When th’ train geet gooin’ Jane oppent her satchel, an’ pood a bag o’ chocolate eaut, an’ offered it to Tum. He took some, an’ hoo honded th’ bag reaurd.

Tum felt moor comfortable then nor he had done since he left Bowton. Jane had worked wi’ him ever sin’ hoo were sixteen, an’ he’d never noticed th’ change in her fro’ girlhood to womanhood. He’d never seen her dressed up afore, for hoo wore clugs at her wark, an’ her brat were so made to cover her that he’d not had th’ chance o’ seein’ heaw shapely hoo were. But neaw, as hoo honded him th’ chocolate, he noticed heaw cleon an’ bonny her taper fingers were, an’ as he lowered his yed, an’ could see her feet in nice-fitting shoon, he thowt heaw dainty an’ leet for trippin’ they looked.

In a bit hoo pood a net bag off th’ rack, an’ hoo spread th’ contents on her knee, an’ hoo axed Tum, wi’ pleasure in her e’en, if he liked um.

"I'm takkin' um aw presents," hoo said. "This hummin' top's for eaur little Alf. It's a nice un, isn't it."

"It's a beauty," agreed Tum.

"This wark-basket's for eaur Nelly. Hoo's in th' sixth standard, an' her taycher said she must ha' one."

"That's very useful," said Tum

"An' I've bowt this Prayer Book wi' big print for my mother; she corn't see so weel at church in th' gas-leet. It's nice, isn't it? An' I've writ her name in it, sithee: 'A Present from Blackpool for my Dear Mother, from her Loving Daughter JANE.'"

"That's grand," said Tum, an' Jane were pleased as he admired it.

Jane chuckled as hoo undid th' last parcel, an' hoo held it up for everybody to see it. It were a mustache cup, as big as a basin, wi' a saucer th' size of a plate. "This is for my fayther," hoo said, "an' weren't he loff when he gets it?"

"He will that, an' I'm sure anybody would," ansert Tum. An' then in a lower v'ice he axed her, "An' what hasta bowt for thisel'?"

"Oh, nowt," replied Jane; "I couldn't afford. Besides, I didn't want owt. We're not rich at eaur heause, but we're very comfortable."

"Does tha mind tellin' me heaw much aw th' lot as cost thee. I'd like to know so as I shall know heaw to spend my brass." Tum were anxious.

"Twelve shillin'," ansert Jane. Tum were fairly disgusted wi' hissels. Here were a woman as warked for him could spend a bit o' money like that on things as were useful an' would delight a heauseful o' folk,

an' make um happy, while he'd wasted four peaund on a lot o' rubbish that were o' no sarvice to anybody, an' he'd made hissels miserable.

Alice Atherton then pood her presents eaut, an' hood spent her brass to as much advantage as Jane. Tum leoned o'er to look at um, an' he were closer to Jane nor ever he'd bin afore, an' he kept so aw th' road to Bowtun.

Ah, Tum, if tha'd only known ! There were a little angel, o' mon's creation, hoverin' o'er thee just neaw. He wove a mantle o' finer texture than any threads ever spun by thee, finer than anythin' produced by th' silkworm, reaund Jane Barnes some yers back. Hoo's worn it tight reaund her ever sin', an' hoo liked it, for it kept her heart warm. That were th' Mantle o' Love, an' Cupid, th' little angel, is unlapping some on it fro' her sweet body an' he'll lap hawf o'th web reaund thee, an' he'll fasten it wi' some darts he awlus carries, an' may tha never loosen it !

Tum rested his arm on th' window ledge, an' looked eaut on th' green fields, but his thowts were aw for th' woman beside him, an' thoose lines o' Missis Smith's were tumblin' abeaut his brain, but Cupid had awterd um for him :

“ There's a lass as wants to be thi wife,
An' hoo'd comfort thee aw through thy life.”

Alice Atherton started a hymn, an' they aw joined in it, an' after that Jane sung “ Abide with me,” an' they helped at that, too, an' just when everythin' were at th' best, they'd gotten to Bowton.

They parted at th' station wi' a friendly Good-neet an' when Tum geet whoam he hadn't heart for owt.

Of cooarse Emma were pleased to see um back again. Hoo knowed Tum would bring summat back for th' childer, but there were such a lot o' stuff o'th' wrung soart that when th' childer axt what their Uncle Tum had browt um, he tow'd Emma to tak everythin' but th' little watch—he'd made up his mind who were to have that—an' divide um hersel'. This put her in a dilemma, so she tow'd Tum *he'd* better divide um, but they should have some tay fust.

They'd not gotten settled at th' table when his little favourite nephew, Tum, who'd had th' worst dose o' mayzles, looked up wi' tears in his e'en, an' said, "Uncle Tum, han yo' not browt us some Blackpool rock?" Tum were very feelin', but through th' mess he'd made o' things he'd never thowt o'th' childer, an' this pleadin' question o'th' lad hurt him. So he went upstairs to his box, wheer he had a few peaunds, geet some silver eaut, an' rushed eaut an' bowt two shillins' worth o' towfy as near alike to th' Blackpool stuff as he could get it, an' th' childer were pacified.

After tay, which mellowed their tempers a bit, Tum distributed th' auction stuff as presents.

"Here, Emma," he said, "I'll start wi' thee. This silver-backed hair brush an' comb's very nice; I could ha' browt thee nowt usefuller." Emma thanked him, an' took it.

"An' this penknife ull do for little Tum," an' he gan it him, an' little Tum cut his finger wi' it straight away, an' skried. Emma bund his finger up, an' th' child chucked th' knife across th' reaum; he didn't want it. When he were quieted, Tum went on:

"These opera-glasses ull do for little Nancy——"

"Why, Tum," interrupted Emma, "Nancy con hardly see yet. What use is them to her?"

"Well, save um till hoo con see," said Tum, "or else give her th' hair brush an' comb."

"That's no better," said Emma, "hoo's hardly any yure on."

"Well, hoo will have some day," remarked Tum, getting impatient, "save um till her yure grows. An' that's aw aw've browt." He said nowt abeaut th' Marley horses an' clock, as he'd a hazy idea he might want them hisselt' some day.

Tum could see as his presents weren't accepted wi' that pleasure as he had hoped for, an' he mused a while, and becomm melancholy when he fancied heaw th' knick-knacks as Jane Barnes an' Alice Atherton had browt whoam would make everyone as geet um happy an' thankful.

When bedtime ccom th' rest were very welcome to Tum, but he were a lung while afore he went to sleep. So much had happened that day that his thowts were in a regular jumble, an' Mrs. Smith's "po'thry"—

"There's a lass as wants to be thi wife,

An' hoo'd comfort thee aw through thi life,"

kept rushin' in his yed when he tried to settle on other things, that his poor brains were fairly bewildered.

"This ull never do," he said rayther leauder nor he intended; "I'st be gooin' off my chump in a bit. It's strange I never thowt o' Jane Barnes afore. . . . But then I'd never had a gradely look at her. I'st say summat sayrious to her to-morn, chusheaw." An' wi' this promise to hisselt' he fawd asleep.

He started eaut for wark next mornin' intendin' to

face Jane as brave as a lion, an' ax her that sayrious question, but when he seed her, an' said Good Mornin' to her, an hoo ansert him cheerily, his tung geet fast to th' roof of his meauth, his pluck dropt deaun'ards, an' he could say no moor. But he watched her so much that mornin' till he couldn't do his wark as he ought to do; moor ends wanted piecin' than ever, but he geet on sumheaw till th' factory bell rung for dinner time.

Emma had gotten um summat tasty, as hoo awlus did, but hoo noticed as Tum's appetite weren't as usual, an' hoo axed him if th' dinner were not to his likin'.

"Yah, it's reet enoof," he ansert, "but I'm not mysel' to-day."

"Why, what is it?" Emma wanted to know. "I've never known thee to come back fro' Blackpool o' that road afore. Wheer doesta feel ill?"

Alick were eitin' his meal wi' a relish up to then, but yerrin' Emma question his brother, he oppent his e'en wider, an' stared.

"I'm noan ill," said Tum, an' to stop further questionin' he said it were nobbut summat he had on his mind. "But I'll tell thee soon, happen to-morn, aw abeaut it." An' with that hoo had to be content.

He geet to th' factory gates ten minutes afore startin' time on th' chance o' havin' it eaut wi' Jane, as he knowed she were awlus before th' time. He'd practised a nice little speech to say to her, but when he geet up to her to say it every word slipped fro' his memory, an' he felt very clumsy an' flushed when he blurted eaut, "Jane, tha said tha'd bowt nowt for thisel' at

Blackpool ; I've a little watch an' cheean as I bowt, an' I durn't want it ; wilita have it for a present ?"

Jane's face blooshed as red as eaur Sunday table cloth.

"Eh, nawe," said Jane ; "it's very kind on thee, but my fayther an' mother wouldn't like me to have a present off thee—I'm sure they wouldn't."

Tum felt as if a firemon's hose-pipe had been turned on him, but he'd gotten desperate.

"Well then, buy it ; tha'st have it for threepence," he said.

"Ay, I haven't threepence to spare ; I'm savin' up to be wed." An' hoo blooshed redder.

"Tha'rt what ?" an' Tum jumped back as if he'd bin scutched wi' a whip. "An' who arta gooin' to marry ?"

"I'm not at liberty to tell thee yet," said Jane.

"Well, that's a caution !" Tum gasped, an' he were welly chokin'. "I've never seen thee wi' a chap. Why weren't he wi' thee at Blackpool ?"

"He were," ansert Jane, "but not as mich as I should ha' liked."

"Why, doesn't he like thee so weel as to want to be wi' thee awlus ?" were Tum's next question.

"I think he likes me," said Jane, timidly, "but I like him better nor anybody, an' if he doesn't wed me I'm sure nobry else shall."

Poor Tum's heart ached. He were madly in love, for th' fust time in his life. Jane knew it, but she didn't know how tantalisin' her banter were to a chap uv Tum's temperament, or hoo wouldn't ha' been guilty on it. He were dejected : he hung deaun his yed, an' when he could speak, it were just above a

whisper : " Well, I'm sorry. I've known thee mony a yer, an' I like thee. I were gooin' to ax thee this very day if I'd ony chance, an' tha tells me this."

" Well, th' day's not done, an' it's not too late to ax me yet." Jane's face might ha' bin th' settin' uv a rose tree as hoo said this.

What a difference in Tum ! His e'en glistened, an' he looked smart enoof to win a race. He awmost sheauted, " Well, wilta ha' me ?" an' afore he'd gotten th' words gradely eaut uv his meauth her answer were at th' eend uv her tung. " Aye, I will," hoo said, an' hoo turned her face away to hide th' tears as dropped so freely fro' her e'en.

Happy Tum ! Happy Jane ! It's a pleasure to tell this little saycret o' their lives, because no lord ever wooed his lady moor honestly nor Tum did, an' no king could get a straighter answer fro' th' depths uv a pure woman's heart than Jane Barnes gan' her lover then.

When they'd gotten their senses back, Tum axed, " Well, shall we walk eaut to-neet, an' we con talk things o'er a bit ?"

" Aye, but I'd rayther tha'd see my fayther an' mother fust. I never goo eaut at neet, an' unless I tow'd um wheer I were gooin' they'd think it strange. But they'll not be vexed if tha'll come for me, becos we tell one another everythin'."

" Well, I'll come at seven o'clock."

Th' factory bell rung for th' wark to start, an' th' time flew as fast as th' bobbins. Thoose four heaurs were happier to Tum than th' three days he'd had at Blackpool.

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Tum were made very welcome by Jane's fayther an' mother. He were very shy at fust, an' couldn't find words to say much, but they were so nice, an' were so comfortable one with tother, that he soon begun to feel awhoam. As he looked reaund th' heause he thowt he'd never seen anythin' like it afore. It were a pattern of cleonliness an' order. When he fust went in, Jane's little brother were sittin' fast asleep in his cheer wi' th' hummin'-top as hoo'd browt him lyin' at his feet, while th' streng he'd spun it wi' were hangin' fro' his finger. Her sister, wot were in th' sixth standard, were sewin', an' were usin' th' wark-basket as Jane had browt her. Mrs. Barnes had her specs on, an' were readin' eaut o'th' Prayer Book wi' th' big print; an' th' fayther set smookin'—th' mustache cup an' saucer were on th' table at his elbow. They were as contented as they looked.

Tum spoke eaut bravely what he'd come for, an' th' fayther axed him some questions, which he ansert truthfully. Jane's mother then axed Tum very quietly if he were sure he thowt so much uv her dowter as to want her for his wife, an' Tum's heart bumped agen his breast like th' piston-rod uv a steom engine as he assured her he did. Then they gan their consent. This matter had been conducted so reverently, witheaut ony fuss, that Tum felt like bein' in chapel, an' when they invited him to draw up to th' table an' have some supper, an' Jane's fayther axed for God's blessin' on it, Tum raily thowt he were takin' th' sacrament. They'd moor conversation after that, an' Mrs. Barnes advised um not to be in a hurry, as she'd like to be sure they loved one another. Tum said they'd not, if they'd not keep him waitin' too lung, becos he an' Jane had

known one another for a lung time, an' he were sure they'd be mated aw reet. This took any further argument away, an' when he'd shook honds wi' um aw except th' little brother who were still asleep, an' bid um 'Good-neet,' Jane went to th' dur wi' him. When he looked into her smilin', bashful face he'd a minute's glimpse at heaven, an' as he pressed th' fust kiss on thoose pure, sweet lips as he parted fro' her he thowt hisselt a miserable sinner as wanted deliverance, altho' I'm sure nobry could ha' charged him wi' indulgin' in any particular sin. Heawever, he were happily in love, an' that fine-woven mantle o' Cupid's were lapt as tight abeaut him as it were reaund Jane.

On th' Saturday neet th' lovers went a walk through th' Market, an' lookin' at th' shop windows, an' as Tum were takin' Jane whoam, he gan her a sovereign to put in th' bank.

"Tha con put it in thy name," he said; "it's a start toward furnishin'."

But when she towd her folk, they said, "Nawe; tha'd best put it in his name; it's his brass, but tha con bank it for him, an' show him th' book." An' when hoo towd Tum he agreed, an' as he thowt abeaut it, he could see as they were honourable, an' wanted nowt off him.

But Jane's fayther didn't like her warkin' wi' Tum neaw as hoo were engaged to be wed to him, an' towd him so; it might gi' some folk reaum for idle gossip.

Tum soon geet caut o' that difficulty, for in th' next reaum to wheer his mules were there were a chap what were a big mon at th' chapel. He'd childer wed, an' Tum towd him heaw matters stood wi' him an' Jane, an' axed him if he'd swop him big piecers for a bit.



"JANE'S" MOTHER WERE READIN' TH' PRAYER-BOOK.

"Aye, I will," ansert Job Harrison (that were his name), "but my piecer's th' next for mules, so he may be ta'n away fro' thee very soon, an' I wouldn't like thee to stond in his road."

"Oh, nawe," said Tum ; "neaw as yo've mentioned it I'll have another ready by then."

An' so it were arranged, an' Tum made up his mind to get his side-piecer ready for a shuve up th' ladder when th' big piecer geet a pair o' mules.

So th' cooarse o' true love begun to run smoothly. Th' days passed very swiftly by, but not hauve as fast as Tum would ha' liked, an' th' evenin's, when they were walkin' eaut, or sittin' in th' heause wi' Jane's family abeaut, were spent as happy as they could be. They'd some difficulty wi' th' Sundays at fust, becos Tum were a Wesleyan, while Jane went to th' church, wheer hoo'd been browt up. But Tum said he seed little difference in th' religions, an' he'd goo to church wi' Jane, so as to be aside on her. So he went wi' her, an' hoo fund th' places for him in th' Prayer Book, an' tow'd him heaw to find Easter Sunday in any yer, an' aw th' festivals, an' he jined wi' her in singin' th' Psalms, an' he prayed for everybody, fro' th' King on his throne to th' poor thief in prison. At th' finish o' th' service he'd tak Jane whoam, an' Mrs. Barnes would make him stop to supper, an' he felt he wouldn't swop his life to live in a mansion in th' skies, or onywhere else, so contented were he.

One neet, after they'd bin courtin' abeaut six months, Tum surprised Jane by axin' her heaw much brass he'd saved up.

"Well," ansert Jane, "I did look o' Monday neet when I banked th' twenty-eight shillin' tha gan me o'

Saturday, an' I think tha's tharty-two peound in. But I'll look again, to be sartin."

"Oh, tha needn't bother," said Tum, "nobbut I wanted to ax thee if there isn't enoof to furnish a little heause wi'. I'm tired o' bein' by mysel', an' I feel as I want thee awtogether."

Jane hung down her yed; hoo couldn't speik for a while, but hoo'd nowt to be ashamed on. She knew he'd spokken fro' his heart, an' she loved him better, if that were possible, for bein' so out-spokken. When she could answer him, it were in a falterin' v'ice:

"Well, it's thy pleosins, Tum. I'm in no great hurry, for I'm content to wait till tha'rt ready. Yet if tha'd like to get wed I daresay we could manage wi' tharty peound. But, if tha doesn't mind, let's goo to eaur heause, an' tha con talk to my mother an' fayther; they'll be pleased to advise us."

So they went, an' Tum tow'd um what he'd like, if they'd have no objection to it. Jane's parents looked at one another for a bit; it were yezzy to see they were sore troubled at th' prospect o' losin' their dowter, for altho' hoo were cooartin', they never dared think uv a separation. Th' mother then said to her husbond, "What dun yo' think abeaut it, William?" an' he ansert, "Well, if tha thinks they may be wed comfortable, I'st not object to it."

Then th' mother tow'd Tum they could see nowt to hinder it, at which he were so glad he'd ha' jumped o'er th' table an' made a foo uv hissels' if he hadn't grown into a regular church-gooer. Mrs. Barnes had to poo her spees off an' rub um, for summat fro' her e'en had so blurred um that hoo couldn't see gradely through um.

Alick went wi' Tum o' puttin' th' axins in, an' Jane an' Emma an' Mrs. Barnes were aw busy for th' next tothri wick buyin' th' furniture an' drapery, while Jane's younger sister (hoo were in th' seventh standard neaw) had th' wark-basket eaut every neet, an' her nimble fingers were busy at top speed crowsherin' anti-macassers an' nic-nacs for t' decorate th' new home.

Mrs. Barnes gan Jane a pleasant surprise one neet just after tay-time. Hoo went to a little drawer in th' big chest an' browt a little leather bag eaut. Hoo put it on th' table aside o' wheer Jane were sat, an' said, "Thy fayther says I'd better give thee this neaw. It's part o' thy wages we've saved up for thee sin' tha were engaged to Tum. As we felt he were so honourable an' straightforrud, we said we'd help yo' as much as we could, so there's ten peound in this bag for yo'; we wish we could make it moor."

Jane were o'erwhelmed. Her fust thowt were that hoo shouldn't take it, for, although they were so comfortable as to be in want o' nowt, hoo couldn't understond heaw they could spare aw that money for her; an' she tow'd her mother so.

"Dunnot bother, my dowter," Mrs. Barnes ansert, "tha's been a good wench, an' it's eaur duty to help thee. We're sure tha'll do thy duty to thy husbond, an' we'd like him to know as we've loved thee, as we should." An' Jane had to be satisfied.

When everythin' had been arranged, an' their cottage (a bran-new un) furnished neat an' natty, Tum an' Jane were jined together in th' bonds uv holy matrimony. They were fairly loaded wi' presents, an' everythin' passed off weel.

Tum had lung enough afore then gotten th' Marley horses an' th' clock as wouldn't goo fro' Mrs. Smith, at Blackpool. Tum had ta'n th' clock to be put reet, an' it had gone ever sin'. They were on th' mantel piece at their new home, an' they railly looked weel.

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It's tothri yer sin' these things happened. Noather Tum nor Jane's bin to Blackpool sin' then, but they're havin' a wick theer next Wakes—perhaps, an' they'll tak another Jane wi' um. They're as happy as th' day's lung, an' in a mornin' Tum wakkens, as soon as dayleet comes, wi' a choilt's chatter, as wakkens Jane an aw, an' hoo lifts her baby dowter fro' its crib an planks it between hersel' an' Tum, as he likes it aside on him. It cooes, an says, "Da, Da, Da," an' kicks its fat legs abeaut, an' poos Tum's mustache. Then Tum ull put his finger on its soft velvety flesh, just under its fust rib, an' it lowfs an' it crows, an' talks in its way; an' he tickles it again, an' it chinks lowder, an' he keeps at it till th' choilt can lowf no longer, but starts o' skrikin'. Then Jane ull sit up, an' say, quite sharp, "Durn't hurt her, Tum; tha'll have her in a fit!" an' hoo taks it to her breast to soothe it. Then Tum ull get up an' make th' fire, an' put th' kettle on. He makes a sope o' tay, an' taks a cupful upstairs to Jane. When he gets theer they'n booath fawn asleep again. He looks at one an' then at t' other, an' says to hissels, "Eh, Jane, tha mun ha' bin a angel when tha were a babby, for hoo's just like thee," an' he kisses um booath. Jane wakkens at that, an' as hoo sups her tay Tum goes off to wark, wi' a lovin' wife's mornin' prayer for his welfare.

At neet as he comes whoam Jane's waitin' at th' dur for him. Hoo lifts th' choilt up, an' it stretches eaut its little arms for t' goo to him, so' he taks it off her, an' it likes him to give it some uv his tay, wi' a extra drop o' milk in, eaut uv his saucer.

Then in a bit Jane ull undress th' choilt, an' taks her to bee-bo. Tom sits smookin' in his arm-cheer, an' as he yers Jane's v'ice singin' th' little cherub to sleep, he sees th' Marley horses an' th' clock as wouldn't goo on th' mantelpiece through th' smook as curls fro' his pipe, an' his thowts wander back to th' Blackpool auction reaum, an' he lowfs to hissels at his foolishness that day, but he doesn't regret it neaw, because it were through that as he determined to have a wife, an' he's moor nor satisfied wi' th' one he's gotten."

Mrs. Barnes caws to see Tum an' Jane, an' th' choilt, as oft as hoo con, an' they spend th' Sunday afternoons mooastly at Barnes-es, an' they aw goo to church at neet. Alick an' Emma Hamer are very thick wi' um, an' th' three families stick very close together. Tum's livin' in hopes uv havin' a son afore lung; if it happens as he expects, I'm feared they'll have to put off their visit to Blackpool for another yer.



ODE TO TH' VILLAGE PARSON.

Thy yure's gone grey ; tha'rt fadin' fast ;
 Aw th' summer o' thy life is past ;
 Tha'rt gooin' tō thy grave at last,
 Unweary saint ;
 Wi' age thy face has changed its cast,
 But never faint.

Thy feeble step gets waker still,
 But theau mun totter on until
 Another does thy mission fill .
 Here below ;

An' when tha's done thy Mester's will,
 To Him tha'll go.

What good tha'st done sin tha's bin here !
 Tha'st whispered mony a sowl a cheer,
 When weighted deaun wi' doubt an' fear
 O' th' life to come ;
 Tha'st comforted when death were near,
 An' helped um whoam.

Tha'll find it hard to goo, I know,
 To heaven, an leove us here below,
 Wi' pungent sorrow, pain, an' woe
 To battle wi' ;
 But we'll brave it aw, an' conquer th' foe,
 Then follow thee.

Life is but short—a measured spon—
 Allotted eaut by God to mon,
 To spend on earth as best he con
 In doin' good ;
 An' then he taks um, one by one,
 Fro' th' thorny road.

There's nowt on earth for thee to crave ;
 There's sweeter rest for th' good an' brave ;
 There's endless jeighs t'other side o' th' grave
 For folk like thee ;
 Tha's nowt to fear—Christ deed to save —
 We aw mun dee.



SOME CHAPTERS CONSARNIN' A FAMILY CAWD SMITH.

TH' FUST CHAPTER.—HOSBURN GROVE.

HOSBURN Grove were th' best part in eaur nayburhood. There were only six heauses in a row in th' Grove, an' everywheer else there were twenty or moor. An' th' folk what lived in Hosburn Grove thowt summat o' theirsels, th' women specially. Every mornin' one met see um comin' eaut o'th' front doors o' cleonin' their steps, an' everyone on um 'ud wear a cleon apron an' her best hat, an' th' show o' fithers an flowers in Hosburn Grove at thoose times were a spectacle to be seen nowheer else. Th' hawkers, when they geet to th' Grove, raised their pratoes a penny in th' five peaund, an' when th' milk-men coom they didn't hit th' sides o' their cans wi' th' whip-stocks, an' sheaut "Milk." Nowt so vulgar. They knocked at th' durs, an' cawd quite nicely, "Milk, ladies ; new milk," An' then th' women 'ud come rushin' on tip-toe wi' their jugs to th' milk float mooastly to see which on um were wearin' owt dif'rent to what they had on th' day afore. So yo' may reckon

as th' folk what lived in Hosburn Grove were blue-blooded aristocrats.

At No. 46 there lived a chap an' his wife an' dowter named Smith. Mrs. Smith an' their Becky were dress-makers, an' they warked very hard an' lung to keep theirsels dacent an' respectable, for Mrs. Smith's husband not only didn't do much to keep th' whoam together, but he mooastly wanted keepin' hissel. It isn't yezzy for me to describe him, but yo'n coom across such folk in yo'r time. He went eaut o'th' heause in a mornin', as cleon an' weel-dressed as his wife could afford to make him, an' he'd come back at neet welly canned up, an' tell his wife as his heart were plaguin' him very much, an' trade were bad, an' he could get nowt to do in his line ; an' she were soft enoof to believe him. Hoo thowt he were unfortunate, an' hoo towd folk in th' Grove he were too delicate to wark, an' hoo thowt it were a shome ut a chap as clever as he were couldn't get a shop wheer his great talent would ha' scope. He talked o'er his misfortin' so much that hoo railly thowt it were so, an' hoo took it as her duty to wark her finger-ends to th' bone to keep him in idleness. I've seen chaps o' that soart afore, an' it's a pity they con get women soft enoof to be gammoned so yezzy.

Neaw I want yo' to keep in mind that these Smiths lived at th' corner heause, number 46, Hosburn Grove, becos if yo' forget it th' tale's speilt.

Well, at number 48, next dur, Bob Smith an' his wife an' babby lived. Bob were th' son o' th' Smith at 46, but he were a different soart o' chap to his fayther. His job were tacklin' in a wayviu' shed, an' he

were hard-warkin' an' steady. His wife, Jane, were as good as him every bit, an' they geet on together very weel. Bob were extra fond uv his mother, but he didn't awtogether approve uv her coverin' up his fayther's faults as hoo did. Bob knowed th' owd chap didn't like wark as weel as he liked drink, an' he were sure th' weakness uv his heart were put on, an' he used for t' tell his mother as if his fayther would drink less he could wark moor. Bob had mony a time helped his mother eaut o' money troubles, when his fayther had browt no brass whoam.

Mrs. Smith an' her dowter, at th' time I'm tellin' abeaut, had been very slack o' wark, an' they'd gotten behind wi' th' rent. They'd bin that road afore, but had pood it up after a wick or two. This time, heawever, they owed for two months, an' th' lonlord were gettin' impatient. So on th' Saturday he coom for th' rent, an' when Mrs. Smith towd him hoo'd no money for him he were mad, an' he towd her if th' rent weren't at his office by ten o'clock on th' Monday mornin' he'd send th' bum baileys. This put her an' her dowter in a weary way, an' when th' husbond coom in abeaut two o'clock, rayther soberer nor usual, th' wife towd him what th' lonlord had threatened.

"Well, let him send um," he said, an' he sat deaun studyin'. In a bit he towd her for t' look for another heause theer an' then, an' hoo mut tell nobry, an' they'd flit on th' quiet.

He then went to their Bob's, next dur, an' after tellin' him th' tale, he axed Bob to help him in a plan o' baulkin' th' lonlord, wi' a chance o' gettin' summat eaut on him.

"What's th' plan?" axed Bob.

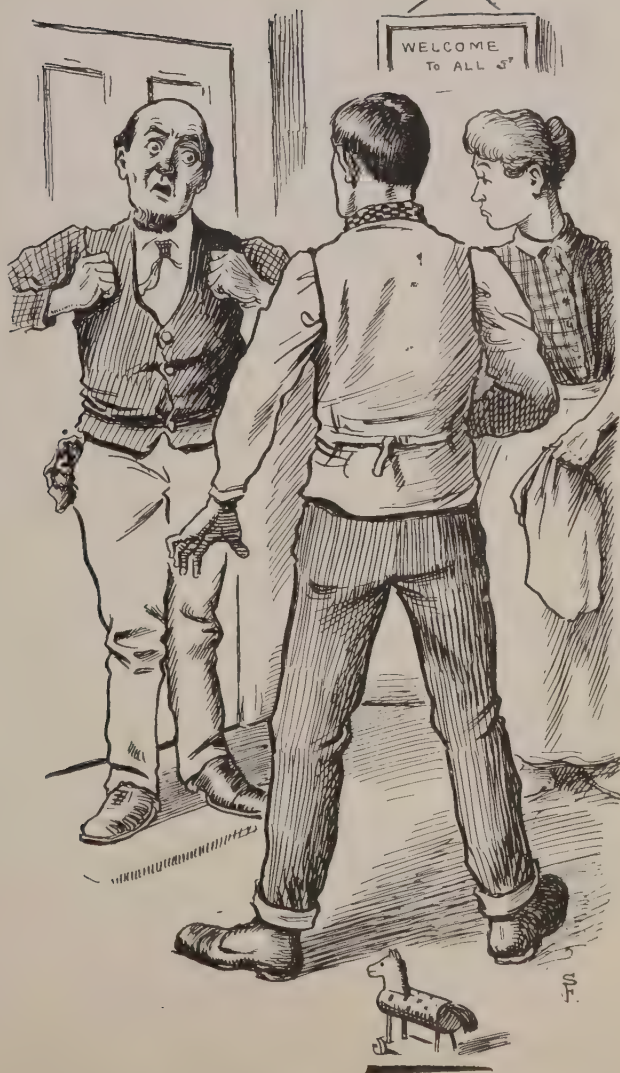
"Why, this," said his fayther: "When th' bums come to eaur heause I'll send um to thee—thy name's Bob Smith, tha knows—an' let um tak' thy goods; then there'll be a shinty abeaut it."

Young Bob flew up at this, an' in his passion he tow'd his fayther he'd gone dotty. "What mun they tak my furniture for? I durn't owe um ony rent. I think if yo' wouldn't drink as much as yo' dun yo' wouldn't have th' baileys comin', an' my mother would be a lot better off. . . Nawe, I corn't see it! Let um tak' my goods? Nawe!"

If owd Smith were good for nowt else he were a good hypocrite. His face were neaw drawn, he'd a pained look, an' he forced tears in his e'en when he lectured young Bob i' this fashion: "It's awlus th' road! Yo' may spend th' best yers uv yo'r life in bringin' up yo're childer wi' a ballyful o' grub, an' clooas, an' givin' um good trades, an' if yo' ax um to do yo' a good turn, heawever little it'll cost um, they turn reaund on yo' like this! I never thowt, Bob, when tha were a choilt, an' I were nussin' thee, aye, mony an' mony a time, tha'd ha' trated thy owd fayther like this in th' time uv his distress."

This talk worked on Bob, an' he felt ashamed uv hissel'. So he said to his fayther: "I'm not turnin' my back on yo', fayther, but is there no other road as I con help yo' beside lettin' th' bums tak my furniture?"

"Nawe, my lad, there isn't," said his fayther, "unless tha'll pay th' rent for us, an' I wouldn't ax thee to do that. If there were another road I should



"Let 'em tak' thy goods" sed his feyther.

ha' tow'd thee, for I'm not one o' thoose hard-hearted chaps as keeps these matters fro' his childer. I browt yo' up to know everythin' o' my affairs, an' I thowt tha' knowed as we should stick together when trouble coom. Besides, we'st make money eaut o'th' plan, an' I think it's only reet we should make a lot o' brass eaut o' th' lonlord, for he insults thy mother every wick when he comes for th' rent, just becos we'n no brass to pay it. If he'd be satisfied wi' thy mother sayin' 'We'n no rent for yo' to-day, lonlord,' I should think nowt on it, but he isn't, an' he stonds at th' dur sheautin', an' th' nayburs yer him, an' start lowfin'. An' he's been threatenin' lately to send us th' bums, an' clear us eaut, just as if poor folk, what's honest, hasn't a reet to live somewheer."

This tale mollified young Bob so far as to make him promise his fayther as he'd let him do what he proposed, feelin' satisfied that his fayther knowed moor than th' lonlord, an' would get um eaut uv a scrape, wi' some profit at th' eend o'th' job.

Mrs. Smith weren't lung in findin' another place to live in, an' that very neet they jumped th' moon, an' shifted mooast o' their furniture to th' new place, but left th' curtains an' blinds up in Hosburn Grove as if nowt had bin disturbed. So on th' Monday owd Smith an' his wife waited for th' bums comin'. Abeaut two o'clock there were a knock at th' dur, an' Mrs. Smith oppent th' upstairs window, as if hoo were cleonin' deaun, an' axed two chaps as were stocd on th' steps what they wanted.

"We'n coom for eight wicks' rent," one on um said.

"Wot rent?" axed Mrs. Smith. "Who's sent yo' here? Haven't yo' made a mistake?"

"Nawe, I think not!" said th' bum, an' he looked at th' blue papper he carried in his hond. "This is Smith's—Robert Smith's—isn't it?" th' chap axed.

"I thowt yo' were wrung," Mrs. Smith said. "Robert Smith lives next dur. An' get off thoose cleon steps. Next time yo' come to a respectable body's heause wipe yore dirty feet."

Th' bum-baileys skulked off to th' next dur. But it's time we geet to th'

SECOND CHAPTER.—BOB SMITH HAS TH' BUMS.

"Does Robert Smith live here?" th' bailey as had done th' talkin' next dur axed.

"Aye, he does," ansert Jane, who had oppent th' dur as soon as th' chap had knocked; an hoo cawd to her husbond, "Bob, tha'rt wanted."

Bob happened to be awhoam that day, for his way-vers were waitin' for warps. It's a good job as he were, for th' choilt had gotten through its teethin', an' had begun o' walking by itsel' th' day afore, so Jane had wshed th' cradle eaut, an' put it in th' scullery for Bob to carry upstairs eaut o'th' road. An' th' cat had kittlet—three bonny black an' white uns—an' as Jane would nobbut keep one, Bob had just dreawned th' tother two when Jane sheauted to him as he were wanted. So Bob had lifted th' deod kittlens eaut o'th' mug, an' lapt up in some newspaper to bury um, but in his hurry to answer Jane he had to put um deaun for a bit, so he dropped um in th' cradle.

Perhaps some folk ull think Bob were cruel for takkin' th' lives o' these kittlens. I durn't approve uv it mysel', for I think there's nowt on four legs as useful as a cat.

What better plaything could yo' have for a choilt, if it's a lad, when it's cuttin' its teeth, than a kittlin' ? Give him one when he's cryin' an' he'll stop in a jiffy. As soon as he feels it he'll find its tail an' start nippin' it an' pooin' it. Then th' choilt ull crow an' th' kittlin' ull me-ow, an' th' choilt ull poo harder. Th' kittlin' ull spit then, an' turn reaund an' scrat him. This makes th' choilt cry, an' his mother has to hunt for th' kittlin'. When it's fund hoo taks it to him again, an' he's quieted. He larks wi' it again, but it wants to get away, an' it poos one road an' th' choilt poos another, an' th' gam goes on till th' kittlin' has another scrat, an' runs off. Th' choilt's had its fust lesson in fizzical culture—he learns to poo hard, an' th' kittlin' learns to meow an' scrat. So they booath get browt up together. Nearly every lad in th' navy, an' every prize-fighter, too, has bin browt up wi' kittlins. Th' ancient Egyptians fund cats so useful that they worshipped um, an' yo' know heaw brave thoose ancients were ; they'd feight onybody. When th' cats deed they stuffed um wi' sawdust to presarve um ; neaw we fill their insides wi' wayter to destroy um. It's a bad sign. Then, again, think heaw useful a cat is in a family. When yore friend, say, invites yo' to have tay wi' him, an' yo' goo, his wife happens not to care for yo', but doesn't like to say so, so hoo'll let th' cat loase on yo'. When yo're sat deaun it'll come rubbin' itsel' again yo'r britches, then it starts o' purrin', an' yo' stroke it till its tail cocks up. Then it'll rowl o'er for yo' to rub it's Little Mary, an' yo' think it's playin', for its purrin' very hard. So yo' tickle it a bit, an' aw at once it sends hauf-a-dozen claws into yo'r hand. Yo're marked for mony a day after that,

an' yo've fund eaut as a cat *con* scratch. Then yo're friend's wife is so sorry, an' "goes" for th' cat, to put it in th' cellar, but it's skedaddled, an' yo' tak it as a strung hint to do th' same, an' yo' goo.

Have yo' ever noticed what good weather-tellers cats are? When yo' see pussy sittin' inside o'th' fender wi' its back to th' foire an' its tail under it, it's a sure sign as there's gooin' to be frost or snow, an' cowl weather; an' if yo' yer two or three on um havin' a concert on th' heause top as yo're gooin' to bed yo' may be sure uv a warm neet.

But I'm forgettin' my tale—I've made a float in th' cloth, as a wayver would say—so I mun get back to it.

THIRD CHAPTER.—TH' BUMS TAK' YOUNG BOB'S GOODS.

When Bob had dropped th' kittlins in th' cradle he went to th' dur, an' axed th' chap what he wanted.

"We've come," said th' bailey, "for eight wicks' rent; that's two peaud, an' seven-an-six for a day's wage for two on us."

"But I durn't owe ony rent," said Bob, an' he cawd to Jane to prove it, but hoo'd just ta'n th' choilt's bed back to th' cradle. Hoo dropped it on th' top o' th' kittlins, not knowin' they were theer, an' hoo hopped it eaut o'th' back dur to keep fro' lowfin'.

"Well," said th' bailey, "th' lonlord says yo' dun, an' we've coom for it; so if yo're not gooin' to pay, we'st have to tak your things."

"I tell yo' again," ansert Bob, "I owe him nowt, an' if yo' tak annythin' fro' here there'll be bother."

"Oh, tha'rt threatenin', art'o? Well, we'st do eaur

duty, an' if tha'rt gooin' to be stupid, we'll come in an' mark thy furniture."

So they went in an' took stock o' t' things, an' put a mark on thoose as they said they'd tak for th' rent. Meonwhile Mrs. Smith, Bob's mother, had cleared her goods eaut o' th' next dur, but hoo left th' blinds an' curtains still up. Owd Smith were in such good humour at th' idea o' making th' lonlord stump up that he didn't goo drinkin'.

Bob didn't oss to pay th' baileys eaut, an' he went to his wark next day—he'd been sent for. Th' bums were gettin' a bit narvous as to what they should do, so one on um went to th' lonlord for further orders. He were mad at what he thowt were owd Smith's stupidity, an' he tow'd th' chap they must stop in th' full time, an' if th' rent weren't paid by then, they should tak their things.

Well, on th' fourth day th' nayburhood were aw ablaze when they seed bills posted abeaut, sayin' as Bob Smith's furniture were to be sowd at Coppum's auction reaum for rent. An' they were moor surpriset when a furniture van coom to Bob Smith's, an' took his goods away. *That* they couldn't understond, for th' nayburs knowed he were a steady chap as warked hard, an' they were aw so sure as he'd a bit o' money put by for ony trouble as should come.

So, on th' followin' Monday, after dinner, there were such a flutter o' fithers an' big hats as had never bin seen afore in Hosburn Grove, for every woman in th' district turned eaut in her best, an' it were a fine procession deaun to Coppum's auction room to see th' sale o' Bob Smith's furniture, as had bin ta'n for back

rent. A lot o' these women were young, an' hadn't bin wed so long, so they believed, uv cooarse, a heause weren't gradely furnished unless there were summat for a choilt to be rocked in, so they'd each on um made up their minds to have Bob's cradle, but that were a little saycret they kept to theirsels.

Th' sale had to begin at three o'clock sharp, for cash only, as Mester Coppum said at th' bottom uv his bills. So, if yo' durn't mind, we'll goo wi' th' creawd an' see heaw th' sale goes on, but we'st ha' to make th' sale a chapter by itsel'.

FOURTH CHAPTER.—TH' AUCTIONEER SELLS A POLL PARROT.

Coppum's salereaum were a big place—two shops knocked into one—an' there were reaum for a lot o' stuff as weel as a creawd o' folk. That day there were a deol o' goods in, an' after Bob Smith's furniture had bin disposed on there were another heauseful o' goods as should be sowd, becos th' owners were gooin' to America. In their tackle were a bonny poll parrot, which were hung up aside o' wheer th' auctioneer had to stond. Abeaut a quarter to three aw th' women fro' Hosburn Grove were theer, as weel as a lot o' other folk as had come to bid for t'other stuff. Th' auctioneer coom in then o' lookin' reaund, an' he seed th' parrot, an' he went aside o'th' cage. He'd a terrible cowl that day, an' he'd a big red honkercher to keep his nose dry. As he stood near it, a chap sheauts eaut, "When are yo' gooin' to sell th' parrot, Mester Coppum?"

"Thee shut up!" said th' parrot. Folk grinned at

that, an' th' auctioneer turned to look at th' chap, an' lowft too. When he looked at th' parrot again it ducked its yed, an' said "Scratch Polly," so he put his finger through th' wires o'th' cage, when th' brid made a snap at it, which made th' auctioneer poo his finger away sharp.

"Dom thee!" he sheauted, as he wiped some red off his finger, an' then he said to th' chap as axed th' question, "I'st sell it fust. I munnot ha' this thing abeaut th' place any longer nor I con help."

"Shut up," said th' parrot: . . . "This is a hot shop."

By this it had gotten three o'clock, so th' auctioneer started th' auction, an' after tellin' folk th' conditions o'th' sale he introduced th' parrot this road:—

"This ere parrot's a brid wuth havin'. (He blowed his nose.) Yo'n yerd it talk English, an' I think it could swear a bit if it liked."

"Shut—up!" skrieked th' parrot.

"I want yo' to help me to-day," said owd Coppum, "Yo' see I've gotten a bad cowl, an' beside my nose runnin', I've neises in my yed, an' my yerrin's not very sure, so when yo're biddin' will yo' speik up, an' then I'st be sure to yer yo'."

Then he put th' red-spotted honkercher to his nose an' blowed it again.

"Neaw, this parrot coom fro' Australia, an' th' chap as owns it browt it hissel'. It's not like th' parrots as are advertised as talkers; this parrot *con* talk. In fact, yo' could howd a conversation wi' it. When yore childer talks as weel as this parrot yo' send um

eaut to earn their livin', an' I dare say this parrot could earn its livin' if it had a trade in its fingers. So there's a chance for th' chap as buys it to larn it to wark; it'll be a job for him."

"Will it?" said th' parrot.

"Aye, it will," said th' auctioneer, an' lookin' rearound he spotted a chap as he thowt had interrupted him, an' advised him to buy it, an' see.

"Will onybody say five peaund for a start?"

Nobry jumped at th' chance, so he sheauted to th' chap as worked for him "Charlie, fotch that parrot to th' front, an' show it round."

Charlie lifted th' cage up, an' as soon as th' brid felt itsel' swingin' it set up such a skrike, an' flew an' battered its wings abeaut th' cage as nearly made Charlie drop it. He put it on th' table under Mester Coppum's bench, an' it settled itsel' theer.

"Neaw, then," said th' auctioneer, "yo' con aw see it. Who'll start th' biddin'? Somebry say five peaund."

"Five peaund," said th' parrot.

"Thank yo'," said Coppum. "Who's bid's that?"

Folk were titterin' by neaw, an' th' auctioneer looked unyezzy, but he reckoned to tak no notice.

"Well, start it wi' summat," he said; "let's get th' sale gooin'."

A chap sheauted "Three peaund."

"Well, that'll do for a start. . . . Mind yo', this is a valuable brid. It *con* talk, as yo've yerd."

"Con it," said th' parrot.

"Shut up," said th' auctioneer, lookin' savage at Polly. "Neaw, then, I've three peaund bid; hoo says three peaund ten?"



"DOM THEE!" he sheawted.

"Three peaund ten!" fro' th' parrot.

Owd Coppum didn't notice it at th' time, an' he went on: "Three peaund ten! Shall I say four peaund?"

There were no answer till he axed, "Who's bid were that?" an' somebry tow'd him it were th' parrot's.

"Here, Charlie," he sheauted to his mon, "we mun stop this joker fro' chatterin'; we'st be here aw day. Fotch that black cloth as covers th' cage an' put it reaund, an' then it con see nowt."

So Charlie fotched th' cloth, an' were puttin' it reaund th' cage when th' parrot geet howd uv his finger. Charlie gan a yell, an' as he pood his hond away he knocked th' cage off th' table, an' th' parrot skreeched again, while Charlie were sayin' things he weren't used to. He let th' cage stop on th' flure while he sucked his finger, an' when he stooped to pick th' cage up th' parrot said, "Dom thee," an' fluttered its wings up an' deaun, an' there were a rumpus in a minute. Heawever, a chap as understood brids coom fro' th' back to help Charlie, so they took it behind th' auctioneer, wheer it had been afore.

Durin' this commotion owd Coppum had bin blowin' his nose an' coolin' his temper. When aw were quiet he tried again.

"Let's see," he said, "we'd getten to four peaund ten, hadn't we? Whose bid were that?"

Nobry owned it.

"Well, then," he said, "we'll goo back to three peaund ten. That were thy bid, I think?" p'intin' wi' his hommer to a chap in th' middle.

"It were," said th' chap.

"It were," echoed th' parrot, but owd Coppum

didn't yer it. He seed th' folk grinnin', heaweever, so he said: "This isn't a lowfin' matter; yo' women should save yo'r smiles for th' parson; I've my livin' to get. . . . Neaw, who'll say four peaund?"

"Me," sheauts th' chap as had helped Charlie wi' th' brid.

"Thank yo'," said th' auctioneer. "Neaw, goo on, sharp; this parrot an' cage is wuth twenty peaund. Yo'n nobbut bid for th' cage yet. Who's gooin' to say four ten?"

"Four ten," said th' parrot. "By gum, it's a dark neet. Go to sleep, Polly."

Th' place were soon in a gradely uproar, an' th' auctioneer looked troublert an' tired. He blowed his nose wi' such a crack as might ha' brasted it, an' cawd Charlie. "Tak' that cage into th' back office eaut o' th' road, an' when tha gets it theer uncover it, an' let it mak as much neise as it likes."

When Charlie went to th' cage th' parrot skried, "Charlie, Charlie, scratch Polly," an' when it felt th' cage bein' shifted, it skreeched, "Dom thee, dom thee," an' folk yerd it gibberin in th' back reaum till Charlie coom eaut an' shut th' dur on it.

Then th' auctioneer geet his good temper back, an' went on wi' th' sale.

"We'd getten to four peaund," he said, an' he blowed his nose again. "That parrot's upset me. Four peaund; dare onybody say four ten?"

A woman as kept a pub said hoo'd give four ten."

"That's better," said owd Coppum; "men's no pluck when women are abeaut. Neaw, some other

lady say five peaund an' we'll leave men eaut o' this little job."

"Five pounds" piped a little lady wi' a Yorkshire terrier under her arm. She'd a v'ice like th' top note uv a clarionet.

"I wish I could just let yo' have it," said owd Coppum, "for I'm sure yo're kind to animals. Yo're husband mun be a happy mon."

Everybody's e'en were turned to'rt th' lady. Hoo didn't like it, an' hoo said to a woman aside on her, "The impudent man. I never had a husband, and I don't want one." But th' dear owd girl needn't ha' said that, for everybody could see it.

After blowin' his nose an' feelin' sorry for his joke, owd Coppum said, "It's only my gammon, missis; but I should like yo' to have th' brid. . . Neaw, somebody say five ten."

"Aw reet," said th' chap as helped Charlie, "I'll gi' yo' five peaund ten."

"That's business," said th' auctioneer; "we're shapin' neaw. Who's gooin' to have th' parrot as con talk for six peaund? I'st not dwell any longer. Five peaund ten, once; five peaund ten, twice——" (Here his nose bothered him, an' he wiped it).

"Six pounds!" said th' little lady wi' t' dug.

"Theighur! I wanted yo' to have it. Six peaund! Th' last time o' axin'. Any advance on six peaund?"

There were no answer, an' th' hommer dropped.

"Will yo' tak it neaw?" axed th' auctioneer.

"No," replied th' lady. "I'll send my servant for it shortly."

"Well, will yo' pay for it neaw, if yo' please? There's no tick at th' auctions; terms cash."

“Certainly,” said th’ lady, an’ hoo paid for it an’ went eaut.”

FIFTH CHAPTER. —BOB SMITH’S CRADLE.

Bob Smith’s goods were neaw to be sowd, an’ th’ auctioneer introduced um this road: “I’m sure there’s a lot o’ yo’ folk as knows these things has bin ta’n for rent. I’m very sorry, I’m sure, but it’s my duty”—

(There were a tear in his e’e an’ a drop on his nose, an’ th’ red honkercher were used again).

“I said it were my duty to do th’ best I could for th’ lonlord. So I haven’t to let my feelin’s interfere wi’ my duty to thoose as employs me. Neaw, th’ fust thing I st offer in this lot is a cradle an’ bed. It’s as good as new, for its only bin used for one choilt. So yo’ women wot’s just gotten wed has a chance o’ preparin’ for th’ stranger yo’r expectin’.”

Here he stopped an’ looked reaund for his mon. “Charlie,” he sheauted, when he’d fixed his e’en on him, “bring that cradle deaun wi’ th’ choilt’s bed in it.”

So Charlie lifted th’ cradle deaun, while th’ auctioneer’s nose were drippin’.

“This cowl’s gettin’ wuss,” he went on, “an’ its hard wark gooin’ on like this, so I mun ax yo’ to help me by biddin’ sharp, an’ then we st get through it. Neaw I’ll start wi’ this cradle.”

Aw th’ young wed women in th’ reaum pressed as close as they could to have a look at th’ only thing they were short on in th’ furnishin’ line, but Charlie stood in th’ front on it while his mester were talking.

“I remember,” th’ auctioneer went on, “when I’d bin in th’ matrimonial state abeaut a year, me

an' th' wife were talkin' one neet, an' I were sayin' heaw nice th' heause looked—we'd everythin' in th' furniture line as were wanted—an' I were admirin' it, th' wife interrupted me by sayin' "But, John, there's one thing we shall want directly."

"What's that?" I axed her.

"Why, a cradle," she said.

"An' it were so. So I see a lot o' young married women here, an' I mun tell yo' that if yo're lucky yo'll want a cradle, an' this cannot be beat onywhere. It's carved at th' top, an' th' rockers is fastened on by turned pedestals, so I should recommend yo' to bid weel for it, or else some on yo' ull miss it. Neaw, heaw mich shall I say for a start?"

Then two women as were aside on it lifted one eend o'th' little bed up, an' there were a very unpleasant smell coom off it. Then summat hit their faces, like as if they were in a sondstorm at th' sayside. Th' women backed eaut o' th' road as fast as they could, for they'd gotten hunderds o' fleas on um, which soon fund their way fro' their faces deaun their necks, an' o'er their arms. There were a entry next to th' auction reaum, an' thoose women rushed in theer to hunt for th' fleas. As they'd left th' cradle two others went an' lifted th' eend o'th' bed up, an' th' fleas bein' eaut for business jumped on to them, an' they scuttered eaut o'th' shop into th' entry. Then other women went forrud to look what were in th' cradle. They stepped back as fast as they could, an' th' entry were soon full on um. One woman as hoo were gooin' eaut sheauted, "There's summat else in that cradle beside th' bed?"

"Is there?" said th' auctioneer, quite gawmless;

“ well, we’ll sell th’ cradle an contents ! Heaw much for th’ lot ? ”

By this time th’ smell had gotten so strung that th’ folk in th’ reaum were howdin’ their nostrils together wi’ their fingers an’ thumbs. Owd Coppum couldn’t smell owt for his cowl, an’ he thowt as th’ folk, by howdin’ their noses, were feared o’ catchin’ it.

“ I corn’t help havin’ a bad cowl,” he said, as he used his honkercher again, “ but it’s not good manners for yo’ to be mockin’ me. Yo’ll catch nowt here—but bargains.”

“ It’s not that,” said one chap, “ it’s th’ stink eaut o’ that cradle.”

“ What stink ? ” axed Mester Coppum ; “ I con smell nowt. Charlie, just see what’s in that cradle.”

Charlie had smelled summat fro’ th’ fust, an’ had gotten as far back as he dare, but neaw he went to th’ cradle, an’ turned th’ bed up. Th’ fleas had gotten weel disturbed by then, so they went for him. His face were covered in a second, an’ as he slapped his cheeks they shifted on to his whiskers an’ up his shirt sleeves, so he run eaut o’ th’ reaum.

A bobby stood at th’ top o’ th’ street, lookin’ deaun, an’ as he seed th’ women rush eaut o’ th’ auction reaum into th’ entry he wondered what were up, so he coom deaun th’ street, an’ stopped at th’ entry, intendin’ to say summat, but he didn’t know what. Th’ entry were just like a hencote uv a mornin’, when th’ poultry wakken up an’ shake their fithers, an’ begin o’ pickin’ theirsels.

He stopped theer a minute wi’ his meawth oppen, when he felt summat on his face, then on his neck,

an' he walked away. His neck were ticklin', so he put his hond up to smack it, but th' trouble had shifted deaun his back. He knowed what it were by then, so he went to th' lamp post at th' corner to rub his back agen it. But th' fleas were sharper nor him. One had gotten reaund him, an' as he twisted his clooas at th' front, th' little innercent went to his showders, an' lower deaun, so he went to th' lamp-post to scrat his back again. A newspaperper lad had bin watchin' him, an' he coom up. Th' bobby axed him what he wanted, an' th' lad says, "Does th' tram pass here for Moses Gate?" Th' bobby swore at him, an' towd him to goo—well, somewheer in th' opposite direction to Moses' Gate, so th' lad run away lowfin'.

Then he went reaund th' corner. In a bit th' sergeant coom, an' says, "What arto scrattin' for, Jones?" an' Jones towd him th' tale, an' he axed th' sergeant to let him off duty, while he went whoam an' changed his shirt. Th' sergeant had a grudge agen Jones, so he grumbled.

"Tha'rt not as smart as I've thowt thee," he said; "a mon in th' force as con catch a thief isn't up to so much if he corn't catch a flea. But tha may goo."

Th' sergeant were pooin' a book eaut uv his pocket to enter th' time Jones went off duty, when a regular whopper jumped off th' bobby reet in his e'e.

"Hook it, Jones; goo neaw," said th' sergeant.

Jones went, leovin' th' sergeant tryin' to get th insect eaut uv his e'e with th' lap uv his cooat.

There were a empty tramcar as went near where th' bobby lived, so he boarded it, an' he went on th' top, thinkin' he might catch one or two if there were

nobry watchin' him. But, by-an'-by, a tall thin lady, as looked like a snowdrop as had been planted very late, went upstairs, an' feelin' as hoo'd be better protected aside uv a bobby, planked hersel' at th' side o' Jones. He were rubbin' an' twistin' his clooas at th' front on him, an' hoo turned her yed reaund to see what were troublin' him, an' hoo'd a flea in her new hat in no time. It geet to her neck, an' when hoo felt it, hoo lifted her fingers like a pair o' sugar-tungs to pick th' little tormentor off. But it were a fause joker, an' slipped deaun her back. Hoo seéd th' bobby rubbin' hissel on th' seat-rest o'th' car, so hoo shifted heigher up on th' opposite side. Hoo felt uncomfortable, for th' little beggar liked a dainty meal, an' were havin' it, so hoo had to rub her back, an' folk as were passin' stopped to stare at th' novel seet uv her an' Jones rubbin' theirsels at th' same time. Then th' lady's flea changed its quarters an' went to th' front on her. Hoo gathered a hondful uv her clooas, an' twisted um sideways an' back again, an' th' flea mun ha' lost its howd, for hoo were quiet for a bit. Th' bobby were havin' some trouble, heawever, for he were twistin' an' mutterin' but could catch nowt. Hoo turned reaund to look, an' he'd gotten his treausers leg up to his knee, an' his stockin' deaun to his ankle. He were huntin' a flea, an' were usin' language woss nor yo'd yer at a vestry meetin', or onywheer else.

Hoo were so shocked that it would be safe to say she were a spinster, but she'd been tickled moor in that quarter of an hower than she had in her natural life afore, only she didn't enjoy it, for th' flea had had aw th' fun. When th' car stopped hoo geet off, but hoo were still wrigglin'.



HUNTING A FLEA.

SIXTH CHAPTER.—BACK TO TH' AUCTION
REaum.

As th' women had scuttered eaut o'th' auction reaum into th' entry other women as were passin' stopped, an', seein' some commotion inside, stepped in, but they couldn't get to th' front, as there were a lot o' brokers in. They'd seen some o'th' women leave th' place in a hurry, an', bein' curious, edged their way to th' cradle, an' then they went eaut, two at a time, wi' as many fleas on um as had had th' chance o' jumpin'. Th' women made for th' entry, too, but there were little reaum for um, an' they had to scratch their road whoam.

Th' men in th' reaum were anxious to know what were in that cradle when they'd seen th' women goo eaut, so thoose nearest to it lifted th' corner o'th' bed up an' snifted, an' then went eaut. Others did th' same, an', howdin' their noses, followed suit, an' th' reaum were gettin' slack.

There were a aleheause two doors off Coppum's; it were at a corner aside o'th' lamp. Neaw, it happened as th' publican were lookin' through th' window as th' bobby were rubbin' his back again th' lamp, so when th' fust two men coom in an' ordered a glass uv ale apiece, an' then started unbuttonin' their wescuts he suspected what were up, so he slipped reaund th' bar, an' fastened th' front doors. He then turned to th' chaps, an' tow'd um as th' beer were too fresh to be drunk, an' he couldn't sarve um. Then he axed um to goo eaut th' back way. But to get um eaut he had to promise to let um have a glass o' porter apiece, an' he sarved um in th' stable.

Meonwhile Mester Coppum had begun o' tastin' what he couldn't smell, an' not bein' able to get a bid for th' cradle which he'd felt sure everybody were so anxious to buy, he went to see what were th' cause o' th' women leovin' th' reaum. Liftin' th' bed reet eaut he seed th' two kittlins which Bob Smith had chucked in th' cradle that day as he dreawned um. After tryin' to catch some o'th' fleas he were peppered wi', he tow'd what few folk there were left in th' reaum as it were no use tryin' to sell owt that day, an' he'd start again on th' Friday, an' finish in one day. His back started ticklin' him, an' he went to rub it agen th' back dur, which were oppen. When he coom back th' reaum were cleared, so he axed Charlie, who were stonidin' eautside o' th' shop dur, what they should do wi' th' cradle?

"I think th' best plan would be to get it eaut o' th' road," said Charlie. "I've just seen a dust cart gooin' up th' street. Mun I stop it? Perhaps they'd empty th' cradle in th' cart, an tak it away."

"Fotch um back," said Coppum, "an' tell um I'll give um a shillin' if they'll take th' bed an' t' kittlins away."

Charlie went, an' browt th' men wi' th' dust cart back. When they walked in th' reaum th' smell welly chocked um, an' they backed eautside. Mester Coppum sheauted, "I want yo' to empty this cradle, an' tak th' stuff away. I'll give yo' sixpence a piece. There's nobbut a choilt's bed in it, an' two kittlins. They're deod, but they make th' place smell a bit."

"Dun they!" said th' foreman o'th' cart. "I think they make th' place stink a lot." After he'd whis-

pered to his mate, he turned reaund an' sheauted to Mester Coppum, "We're not allowed to tak deed cats; besides, we durn't want th' job. A shillin's no good to us." An' they made as if to goo.

"Here!" bawled Coppum, "you'd best tak um neaw. If yo' durn't we'st ha' to chuck um in th' dust can, an' they'll peison hauf o'th' nayburhood. Yo'll have to shift um at th' finish."

"Not us," said th' spokesmon, "that's not eaur job; we're not midden-emptiers; we're above that. But to oblige yo' we tak um away for hauve-a-creawn, an' no less."

Mester Coppum studied a minute. "Tak um off, then," he said, so th' men geet howd o'th' cradle, carried it sideways to th' edge o'th' cart, an' tipped it o'er. Th' fleas were liberated, an' mony a passer-by as went through what they thowt were a cloud o' dust wondered why they itched so for th' rest o'th' day, till they went whoam at neet an' fund eaut th' cause o' their trouble.

SEVENTH CHAPTER.—HEAW TH' SMITHS AN' TH' LONLORD SETTLED TH' BOTHER.

When th' bums had ta'n Bob Smith's furniture, Bob went to talk wi' his fayther as to th' next move. Th' owd chap were quite merry, an' chuckled as he thowt uv heaw they'd make th' lonlord sit up for it. So they went to a lawyer straightaway, an' laid th' case afore him.

"And you say," said th' lawyer, "that you not only cwed the man nothing, but that he was not your landlord?"

"That's just it," said owd Smith. "Eaur Bob

owes nowt to nobry ; it's me as owes th' rent, an' he's ta'n eaur Bob's things."

"A most dangerous game to play," said th' lawyer. "And how much do you value the goods worth that he has taken?"

"Tharty peaund."

"Oh! Then we'll claim thirty pounds for the furniture, an' thirty pounds for illegal distraint. Will that do?" An' th' lawyer chuckled, as they gen'rally do when they're sendin' folk trouble.

"That'll do very weel," ansert owd Smith, an' he tried to look wise. He turned to his son, an' said, "Sixty peaund ull do, weren't it, Bob?"

Young Bob's meawth run wayter at th' thowt o' sixty peaund for what bit o' harm he'd suffered, an' he couldn't speik, but he nodded his yed.

"Very well," said th' lawyer, "I'll issue a writ at once. . . . Let me see, I shall want your address," speikin' to Bob.

"We're livin' wi' my fayther an' mother at present," Bob tow'd him, "an' th' address is 4, Blackstaff-street."

"That will do," said th' lawyer, as he wrote it deaun. "Good afternoon." An' he showed um eaut.

* * * *

Two days after, th' lonlord were sittin', lookin' glum, in his office. He were toastin' his shins afore th' fire, an' he were starin' at th' hot coals to see if he could find a road eaut uv a difficulty, for he'd just gotten a writ for sixty peaund for unlawfully distrainin' on the goods of "Robert Smith, junior, now residing with his father at 4, Blackstaff-street." He were disturbed by

a knock at th' dur, an' he said "Come in." An' in walked Mester Coppum.

"Good day, Mester Parkison," Coppum started, "I've cawd to see you abeaut that furniture o' Smith's that I should ha' sowd yesterday."

"Why, what abeaut it? Didn't yo' sell it?"

"Nawe, I didn't. Everybody rushed eaut o' th' reaum when I offered th' fust article for sale."

"Hello, there's moor trouble," said Mester Parkison to hissel', an' then he axed, "Whatever did they goo eaut for? Were there a boggart in it?"

"Not exactly a boggart," said Mester Coppum, wi' a twinkle in his e'e, "but there were two deeod kittlins in it. They were covered wi' fleas, an' they stunk woss nor th' fish market." Then he towd aw th' day's proceedings, finishin' up wi' "An' this is what a poll parrot did," unlappin' a yard o' rag fro' his hond, an' showin' Parkinson his finger; "but I did manage to sell that chap."

Parkison didn't notice th' finger much; he were too busy thinkin'. In a bit he raised his yed, an' said, "Well, I'm sorry for yo'r misfortins, but I'm glad yo'n not sowd th' furniture, becos there's gooin' to be trouble. See yo', I've gotten a writ this mornin'."

He honded th' blue papper to Mester Coppum, who read it, an' then said, "Um ! an' cornt yo' see through this; it's as plain as dayleet."

"Nawe, I corn't; what dun yo' mak on it?"

"Why, it's this: Yore baileys has gone to th' wrung heause, an' they'n ta'n th' son's goods instead uv his fayther's."

"Heaw con that be?" axed Parkison; "I sent um to 46, Hosburn Grove."

"Happen yo' did. But they took th' goods away fro' 48."

"Phew!" an' Parkison whistled.

"That's what they'n done. But this owd Smith's a wily beggar. If he lived at number 46, it's plain as he's made a moonleet flit, but he's not bin smart enoof, for he gan hissels away when he tow'd his lawyer as their Bob were stoppin' wi' him, an' his address is on this blue papper."

Mester Parkison jumped fro' his cheer smilin'. "I see through it neaw," he said. "I'm fain yo' cawd. Durn't sell thoose things till yo' hear further. I'll goo to *my* lawyer this minute." They went eaut together, but parted at th' dur, Mester Coppum to go to his auction reaum, an' Mester Parkison on th' road to his lawyer.

Mester Longbill, attorney-at-law an' commissioner uv oaths, were in his office when Parkison geet theer, an' th' lonlord were much relieved, for he'd bin in a terrible sweat. After tellin' him aw abeaut it, an' showin' him th' blue papper, Mester Longbill rubbed his honds, then he rubbed his chin; happen he were thinkin' heaw mich he could make eaut o'th' job. In a bit he axed Parkison' "Would you rather settle the matter by arrangement, or send Smith to prison? He's liable to three months' imprisonment for fraudulently evading payment of rent, but if you are willing to settle the matter on the condition that his son withdraws his claim, I think I could bring him to."

"Then bring him too," ansert Parkison, "for I'm tired o't th' whole job."

So Longbill sent owd Smith a letter, tellin' him he'd laid hissel oppen for three months' hard labour for his moonleet flit, an' sayin' if he didn't come deaun an' bring ninety peaund (three times th' value o'th' goods he'd shifted, as Mester Parkison said they were wuth), a summons would be sent fro' th' police office at once.

Owd Smith an' Bob were booath in th' heause when th' letter arrived. Before th' owd chap oppened it he thowt it were surely an offer to pay summat to settle Bob's claim, an' he tore th' envelope oppen wi' a swagger as said to Bob, "I knowed heaw it would be ; I tow'd thee he'd be glad to settle it." But when he put his specs on, an' held th' letter in one hand an' wit t'other scrattin' his yed, his face were th' shape uv a pullet's fust egg—thick at th' top an' tight to'rt th' bottom.

Young Bob were terribly mad wi' his fayther, an' some very strung words passed between um. Mrs. Smith an' Becky were skrikin', an' Jane said she knowed heaw it would be. Hoo'd never had a wrung word wi' her husbond sin' they were wed, but neaw langwidge flew abeaut like fireworks. "Tha'll p'raps ha' moor sense next time !" Jane said ; "th' idea uv thee lettin' th' bums breik our heause up to pleeos an' owd sot as is too lazy to wark, like thy father."

Mrs. Smith fainted at this, an' they aw had to turn to her, to get her reaund. Hoo weren't used to fits o' that soart, so when hoo'd come to, after a lung spell, they'd getten calm again, an' begun o' talkin sensible. It wur proposed as owd Smith should goo to Longbill's at once, an' settle th' affair as best he could, rayther than goo to prison.

This fired Bob again. "Nawe!" said he; "I knowed heaw it would be at th' start, an' I were sure I should be th' sufferer. Why doesn't he wark to pay his road. instead o' causin' bother like this? Let him goo to prison! Three months' hard labour ull do him good; he's never warked for three months together sin' I were born."

"Durn't bother wi' him, Bob," pleaded Jane; "it's not wuth it. Thee go deaun, an' mend th' matter as well as tha con. I've faith in thee; thy fayther ull make a bigger mess if he's ony moor to do wi' it."

Bob's mother an' Becky helped Jane to persuade Bob, so he went.

It weren't a nice job, speshally as his fayther had been so cocksure o' makin' a pile eaut o'th' bailey's mistake, but he'd gotten calm bi th' time Longbill had convinced him heaw foolish his fayther had been.

"Well, what dun yo' propose to do?" axed Bob.

"Oh, nothing more," ansert Longbill, "than take a summons out against your father, as we have told him, and the law will take its course."

"But, then, if my fayther goes to prison look what a disgrace it'll be to us."

"We've nothing to do with that," said Mester Longbill; "I shall be sorry, of course, to put the law in motion, but your father has, by his conduct, asked for it. It's a serious affair, but if you would like to settle it, as a preliminary you must withdraw all claim against Mister Parkinson, an' then we might arrange."

"Aw reet," said Bob, "I'll withdraw all claims agen Mester Parkison."

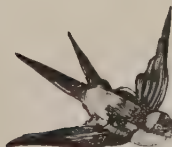
"That's right," said Longbill; "then sign this paper, abandoning any claim."

Bob signed it.

"Now," added Mester Longbill, "if you'll agree to pay the rent owing by your father, we will return your furniture at once. It seems nothing has been sold, so that there need be no delay."

"Goo on, then," said Bob, "I'm sick on it."

Well, Bob paid his fayther's rent up, an' geet his furniture back. This streng o' circumstances wakkend owd Smith up very much, an' so shomed him wi' his family that he geet wark, an' has kept at it ever sin', so we may fairly say as things turned eaut for th' best after aw.





SOME FILOSOFY; AN' JOE SHORT'S FUST FEIGHT.

“**I** WONDER,” said Joe Short, “if bawd yeds is ony relation to midges?”

“What?” I axed, an’ as I oppened my meawth i’ surprise at th’ question my pipe dropped eaut, an’ I swallowed a looad o’ smook. Then I started cowfin’ till I were red in th’ face, an’ I were welly choked. When I *were* able to speik, I says, “Whatever dost meeon, Joe?”

We’d been havin’ a walk o’er th’ cliffs at Bispham, an’ had gotten as far as th’ Gynn on th’ road back.

“Well, Anoch,” he says, “if tha’ll not kill thyself I’ll tell thee. I’ve noticed that whenever I’ve walked along these cliffs to Bispham I’ve bin welly blinded by th’ midges followin’ me, an’ gettin’ in my ears an’ meawth, an’ aw o’er my face. They were as thick as summer hailstones afore th’ rainbow comes. But there’s bin noan abeaut this back end. I seed lots o’ chaps last summer walkin’ on th’ cliffs beaut hats, dressed in knee breeches, wi’ their legs padded as fat as their yeds, an’ there were some on um as bawd on their nappers as th’ top uv a collifleawer. I’ve noticed, too, as th’ midges followed thoose bawd yeds as far as they went, an’ tickled an’ bit their soft places till th’

chaps were fain to turn back to Blackpool, th' midges stickin' to um aw th' road. An' I were wonderin' if thoose fellies took aw th' breed on um away fro' Blackpool."

"I durn't know, Joe," I said, "but neaw as tha's mentioned that, it brings summat to my mind as I were witness on mony a yer sin'. . . . A day-skoo taycher o' my owdest lass were gettin' wed; I knowed her an' aw th' family on um by seet, but they didn't know me. I weren't warkin' that day, an' as I were near th' church when th' carriages drove up, I went an' watched th' ceremony eaut o' curiosity.

"Well, I geet in a pew just at th' back uv her parents. Her fayther had a bawd yed, an' as we were prayin', an' everythin' were so quiet an' solemn, I yerd a blue-bottle buzzin abeaut, an' in a minute its buzzin stopt aside o' me. I lifted my yed an' looked (I couldn't help it), an' it had settled on th' owd gentleman's nob, which, as I said, had no yure on th' top. It were havin' a good tuck in off th' gracey part, as it were a very hot day. It tickled him, for he slapped his flat hond on th' top uv his yed, an' it seaunded all o'er th' church. But th' blue-bottle had gone.

"He pood his honkercher eaut uv his pocket, an' rubbed it aw o'er his yed, an' he seemed reet then. In a bit I yerd th' buzzin again, an' th' blue-bottle dropped reet on th' top o' th' bawd lump. It mun ha' bit him hard, for his hond went slap on th' spot, wi' a neise like a plank fawin' off a scaffold. An' he missed it again.

"He were so mad he sit up straight in th' pew, an' I think he'd blue-bottle-murder in his e'en, nobbut I

couldn't see um. Well, aw were quiet for a bit—a short bit—when I yerd th' music once moor, so did th' owd gentlemon, for he'd his hond ready when th' blue-bottle dropt on th' back uv his yed, an' th' hond coom deaun, just as we were singin' 'A-men,' wi' a bang on th' blue-un an' squashed it. That fly were big enoof to ha' bin slaughtered at th' abattoir. His yed were in a fine mess, an' as he wiped it, th' skeleton uv his tormentor dropt on his collar, wheer it hung as if it were danglin' fro' a spider's web. So; neaw as tha's made me think on it, there may be some connection between midges an' blue-bottles an' bawd yeds. It's like th' looadstone an' needle, one draws t'other."

"I'm fain tha agrees wi' me on that p'int," said Joe, "because it looked so soft, I dare hardly mention it."

"Joe," I said, after thinkin' a minute or two, "thoose bawd yeds theau's seen on th' cliffs puts me in mind o' summat I've noticed mony a time, an' I didn't know whether to lowf or cry for shame when I've seed it. It's this: Every day in th' sayson tha may see young men an' women—generally three or four couple—walkin' abeaut these cliffs witheaut caps or bonnets, th' chaps in knee breeches an' th' wenches witheaut cloaks but plenty o' frills an' folderols on their dresses, an' they strut as airy as if they owned th' lond, an' say, an' all that therein is. Th' procession's generally tailed up wi' a chap wi' a bawd yed linkin' up a lass wi' red yure. An', as tha mentioned at fust, I've seen mony a time whole columns o' midges floatin' abeaut th' last couple. They'll drop on th' red yure fust, then they'll shift for refreshment on th' poor chap's bawd yed. He pretends he's injoyin' th' walk,



THE MIDGES FOLLOW HIM.

but it's aw make-believe, an' *she* wishes she were awwhoam.

“Th' chaps, tha knows, are strangers to th' wenches, but they'd met um th' neet afore at one o' th' dancin' reaums, an' they agreed to meet in th' morniu'. They do meet, an', as tha met expect, they're aw bare-yedded. That's swagger. Well, th' chap wi' th' bawd yed is moor often than not th' sharpest i'th' lot, an' he tries for th' fust pick o'th' lasses. But th' one he spots has happen been among th' midges afore, an' hoo says, 'Where's your hat, Charlie?' That settles it, as far as hoo's consarned. Noan o'th' lasses wants him, but th' feawest on um's left witheaut cheice, so Mester Bawdyed has to have her. An', as I said, hoo's generally red yure. But I'm not meonin' as every woman wi' red yure is feaw. Nowt o'th' sort. Any skoo-lad ull tell thee as Queen Elizabeth had red yure, an' it set th' continent o' fire, an' Philip o' Spain were so ta'n up wi' her gowden strands as he sent word sayin' he'd wed her. 'Wilta?' hoo axed; 'nay I think not! I'st never ha' thee as lung as tha lives by suckin' oranges.' Philip were mad at that, for he were a greit king. 'Go back an' tell her,' he said to his flunkey as were a ambassador, 'as I'll have her, if it's nobbut to show her who's th' mester.' An' Elizabeth said, 'Let him fotch me then.' Hoo were a detarmined woman—red-yured uns are—so hoo coom to Lancashire to raise a' army. Hoo went to Owdham th' fust, an' when hoo tow'd what Philip had said, th' chaps rushed off for sowjers theer an' then, an' hadn't time to ready their yure, so hoo caw'd th' regiment 'Owdham Ruffieds.' Then hoo went to Bowton, an' chaps trotted off to list in as greit a hurry. Th' Wiggin

colliers went i' their clugs, an' there weren't arms enuff to goo reaund, so she cawd them her 'Wiggin Puncers.' When Philip yerd as Queen Bess, as they cawd her, had gotten such a army as that, he'd sense enuff to know as it couldn't or wouldn't be licked, so he awterd his plans, an' sent th' Armada filled wi' powder an' stuff to blow eaur little country up, but th' Armada's not been yerd on sin'."

"Tha'rt skippin' th' subject, Anoch," Joe said, "I know aw abeaut that; it's history."

"So it is, Joe; I'd forgotten. But I were talkin' abeaut th' folk on th' cliffs, weren't I?"

"That's reet, Anoch; tha were."

"Well, tha'll see groups like as I've mentioned any day in th' sayson, an' when tha sees um again just try to imagine heaw rich this country is, for every one o' thoose young men mun be gettin' at th' very lowest five hunderd a yer."

"Nowt o'th' soart," said Joe, an' he struck a match to leet his pipe again. "I'll bet their wages are nearer fifty peaund a yer nor five hunderd."

"Well, that may be so," I ansert, "but I'm nobbut showin' thee heaw they'd like to make folk think they geet so much."

"I see neaw what tha'rt drivin' at, Anoch, an' I've often lowft at their impudence mysel'.

"But that's not th' wust on it, Joe," I said; "what pains me moor is to see 'heaw yezzy it is for young men to get sweethearts neaw-a-days. Thoose lasses tha'll see walkin' on th' cliffs stick howd o' th' lad's arms as if they'd have um, wilta-shalta. It's disgustin'. When I were a lad we had to feight for eaur wenches. an' a good lass wouldn't look at a lad unless he'd had

a black e'e or two for her sake. If he'd had his nose brokken hoo valued it still moor as a ornymment, an' hoo'd love him harder. I fowt twice for eaur Susan, an' I've had her forty yer, yet we're as happy as two red robins at Christmas. Though she's gettin' owd neaw, an' th' lines on her face show deeper, still, when hoo smiles at me, an' I see traces o' th' breetness uv her young days flashin eaut uv her e'en, I feel as I'd feight for her again, as owd as I am. In thoose days th' Divoorce Cooart weren't bothered unteein' church knots; th' mon stuck to th' wench he'd fowt for an' won, an' she stood by him; but neaw th' Cooart's at it every day upsettin' th' weddins o' rich folk who owt to know better. So, I tell thee, a woman what's wuth havin' is wuth feightin' for."

I were a bit excited on th' subject, an' when I'd done I felt hot.

When I looked at Joe his e'en were starin' across th' say, an' his pipe had gone eaut again. He'd been thinkin'. When I stopped he roused himsel.

"What tha says, Anoch," he said, "is very true, an' my thowts has wandered back to my cooartin' days. My fust feight were for a wench, an' th' lad as I fowt were one o'th' best friends I ever had, but we'd a good battle for eaur fust sweetheart, an' noather on us geet her. But that boxin' match were good practice, for yers after then I had to feight my road into eaur Grace's affections, an' I'm sure hoo thowt moor on me for it."

"I never yerd thee tell o' that fust feight, Joe," I said, "but I should like to yer it."

"Well, tha shall," Joe ansert. "But let's goo into

th' shelter. Th' sun's beilin' hot here. It might be midsummer, i'stead o'th' middle o' December."

"Th' weather's very good ; but it owt to be nice at Blackpool," I said, as we walked across to one o' th' kiosks, an' carred us deaun.

Joe started. "Tha knows," said he, "when a lad's between fifteen an' sixteen he gets an idea that he's quite a mon. Well, a lot on us abeaut that age signed th' temperance pledge, not as we knowed owt abeaut it, for we were life teetotalers, but there were a lot o' Temperance Halls abeaut Bowton in thoose days, an' we wanted somewheer to goo on wet neets, an' there were plenty o' fun to be had at thoose places. We joined a society somewheer abeaut Halliwell Road, an' every Sunday neet we used to be at th' meetins, an' oft enoof in th' wick time. Th' yed mon were a foreman fitter in th' foundry, but he were mooastly away fro' whoam fittin' machinery up. He were a nice-lookin' chap, an' favvort a gentlemon when he were dressed up. He gan a deol o' brass to th' cause, for one time he'd bin a greit drunkard hissel', so he wanted to make his owd pals believe as cowl wayter were better for th' constitution than nut-brown ale, but I mun tell thee th' owd toppers were slow at believin' him. For thoose raysons th' committee made him cheermon, an' when he were awhoam they made a fuss on him.

"His name were Ormrod, an' he'd three fine dowters. Th' owdest, Mary, were cooartin' ; th' next, Jessie, were abeaut sixteen, but hoo looked twenty, for hoo were weel built, an' hoo wore lung frocks ; t'other lass were too young for lads to bother abeaut.

"Neaw, one or two uv us lads geet it into eaur silly

yeds that Jessie were noddin' her cap at us, an', uv cooarse, we swaggered abeaut, like gam cocks, showin' eaurself, when hoo were at th' meetins. We were so jealous o' one another, that, though we didn't come to blows, we were awlus ready. But two on us, Harry Farnworth an' me, were badly smitten, for Jessie ud talk to oather on us, when t'other were away, as if there weren't another lad in th' world.

“ We used to have two parties a yer, an' after th' tay were shifted we'd spend th' evenin' in rompin'. Eh, what fun we used to have ! There were as mony lasses as lads, an' if that Temperance Hall did nowt else good, it were th' meons o' mony a couple gettin' wed, an' th' population uv Halliwell to-day is th' result on it. But I'm gooin' to tell thee uv some bother we had, as happen shaped th' cooarse o' my life. One neet, at a party, after tay we'd settled deaun for th' fun, as usual, when I noticed as Jessie Ormrod, were talkin' very sayriously to a chap—a full-grown mon—cawd Joe Benson. He'd not been a member so lung, but he'd jeined for a purpose, as tha'll see. He were a moulder, but o' Sunday neets he wore a cleon collar an' a striped tie, fastened wi' a goold breast pin. But what disgusted me were as at th' bottom uv his cooat sleeves he had a pair o' starched cuffs hangin' eaut, an' he tried to talk fine—but, sometimes he forgeet hissel'. When I seed him talkin' so nice to Jessie Ormrod, an' she liked it, I—hated him.

“ Well, when th' forms were shifted, somebry axed what we should play at, an' one o' th' lasses sheauted, ‘Drop honkercher.’ An' we started. Tha knows that gam, Anoch : we make a ring, an' stick howd uv

honds, an' then th' lass starts o' runnin' eautside o' th' ring wi' a honkercher in her hond, an' hoo drops it on th' road, beaut stoppin', at th' heels o'th' lad hoo likes best. It's a good gam; it gives one a seet in th' inner workins o' human nature, for it shows heaw every lad i'th' ring mun think hissel' th' nicest in th' cruush, for he looks reaund to see if hoo hasn't dropt th' honkercher behind him. When hoo has let it faw th' lad has to pick it up an' catch her afore hoo gets to th' place he's just left, or else he loases th' kiss as would ha' been his reward.

"Well, some lass dropt that honkercher at me, an' I were after her like a whippet dug, an' byet her yezzy. Then I went reaund wi' it, an' dropt it at th' back o' Jessie Ormrod. Neaw I did try for a kiss fro' her, but hoo were too smart for me. I were a bit mad, an' I couldn't help bein'. But I felt wuss when I seed her drop that honkercher at th' back o' Joe Benson, an' when he started o' runnin' hoo slackened her speed so as he could catch her. In a bit some other lass dropt it behind me again, an' I very yezzily won a road to her lips. Then I let th' honkercher drop at th' back o' Jessie for th' second time. Hoo expected it—foo as I were—an' if hoo didn't byet me at runnin' again I'll be hanged. I needn't tell thee wheer th' white linen went to after that, but I thowt after as Jessie could ha' done wi' bein' kissed wi' Joe Benson aw neet.

"Heawever, Harry Farnworth geet th' honkercher fro' somebry, an' as he went reaund he let it slide very nicely at th' back o' Jessie Ormrod. Hoo knowed it were comin', an' hoo seet off runnin'. Well, hoo'd ha' licked him, but just as hoo were droppin' into his place her foote slipped, an' he won. My human

nature could stond no moor, an' I were grumpy aw neet. When th' party broke up, an' as we were gooin' eaut, Harry Farnworth begun o' chaffin' me, just because he'd kissed Jessie an' I hadn't, an' he said she wouldn't let a cove like me shuv th' dobbey-horses reaund if hoo were ridin'. T' other lads lowft, an' they walked aside uv Harry, as if they were shomed o' me. This welly broke my heart, an' altho' I weren't cryin', my cheeks were gradely weet wi' wayter fro' my e'en. Harry were speilin' for a feight, an' he couldn't ha' gone abeaut gettin' it in a smarter road.

"So I went up to him, an' said, 'Harry, if tha says that again, I'll make th' words choke thee.' When I thowt o' that at after it were a bit foolish on me talkin' that road, for Harry were two inches bigger nor me, but he were thin an' lanky, while I were a sturdy lad.

"'Ger on wi' thy makin',' said Harry, 'an' I'll spread some o' that stuff on th' flure eaut o' thy pud-din' yed,' an' he pood his jacket off.

"Harry's temper were gooin' up, an', what were strange, mine were coolin' deaun very fast. I were sorry I'd spokken, but I daren't draw back neaw.

"When we'd rowled eaur sleeves up, Harry axed Bill Johnson, th' strungest lad amung us, if he'd see fair play. Bill had fowt mony a time, an' he were one as wouldn't stond any nonsense fro' owt his size. 'Oh, aye,' ansert Bill, 'if yo'll feight wi' yo'r neives. No puncin', remember.'

"So we agreed to feight wi' fair boxin', an' Harry sheauts to me, 'Arto ready?' 'Aye, I am,' I ansert, an' he coom on. I mun ha' shut my e'en then, for I didn't see him, but I felt he were somewheer abeaut,

an' in a bit my heel kenched o'er a stone, an' as I felt summat touch my face I fawd on my back. I rowled o'er an' were up sharp, but as I stood up Harry gan me a regular baz reet o'er my meawth, an' I went deaun again.

" 'Time,' sheauted Bill; 'a minute's rest. Th' fust reaund goes to thee, Harry.'

" While we rested, Bill says to me, 'Goo for his face, Joe;,' an' then he went to Harry. an' advised him to hit me just above my stummack.

" We started again, an' I were tryin' to do what Bill towld me, but I fund I weren't tall enuff to reich Harry's face, an' he were too high up to come deaun to my body, so we dodged abeaut doin' very little till Bill cawd 'Time.'

" I coom back to my own style, if I had one, at th' thard round. I were larnin' to keep my e'en oppen neaw, so I went for Harry as hard as I could goo. He were faster on his feet nor me, an' I had to run after him reaund a circle. Sometimes he'd stop an' catch me one on th' chops, an' start runnin' again, me after him. Th' lads were chaffin' him for runnin', so he stopped an' sent his arm eaut, an' I fawd again. I'd lost my wynt wi' skippin' after Harry, so I lay on th' flure till I yerd Bill ceauntin' me eaut. Then I jumped up for th' fourth reaund.

" My paddy were up neaw. I didn't know whether to cry or not, but I thowt I'd bite my lip instead. I tried to put it in my meawth, but I couldn't, for oather my face had run up or my lip had swelled. When I looked in th' glass next mornin' my lip *were* swelled. That made me sure as Harry Farnworth had hit me.

" Th' fourth reaund begun weel. Harry started

runnin' reaund, but I didn't follow him far. I turned afore he did, an' as he were passin' I put my fute eaut, an' tripped him up —or, should I say, tripped him deaun. I waited for his gettin' up, an', as he did, I planked one fro' my reet fist bang on his chops. I should ha' gan him some moor, but Bill Johnson geet howd on me, an' said that reaund were mine.

“While we rested I were gettin' used to it, an' I didn't feel feared a bit. ‘This is th' fifth reaund,’ said Bill Johnson; ‘neaw, Harry get on.’ I were waitin' wi' my neives up, but he were a while a-comin', an' I thowt he were feelin' like I did at th' start. But he did come, an' I helped mysel' to his body pratty weel, an' as he were tumblin' again my left fist loded on his lips. He were up again, afore I'd time to steady mysel', an' I geet some attention fro' his reet neve just under my left e'e. It made me blink a bit, an' I run reaund wi' Harry after me. I stopped in a hurry, an' he went flyin', but he dropped on th' flure.

“Bill Johnson sheauted ‘Time.’ He slapped me on th' back, an' said, ‘That's thy reaund too, Joe.’

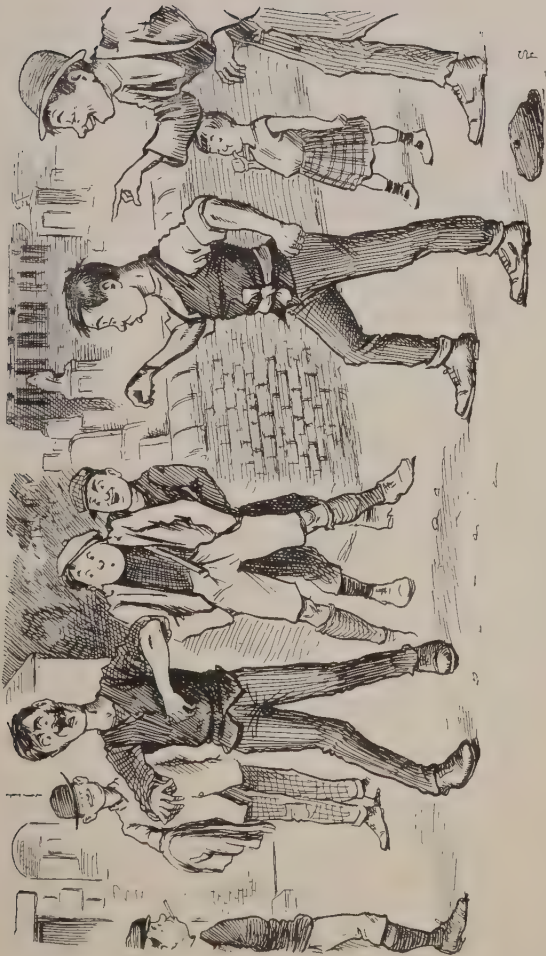
“We sat us deaun on th' low wo' for a bit, when Bill cawd us for t' sixth reaund. We'd squared up, an' somebry sheauted, ‘He's bleedin’. I could feel nowt, so I rubbed my honds o'er my face, an' there were nowt theer, so I doubled my neives again, an' set mysel'. When I looked at Harry, oh, what a face he'd gotten! It were covered all o'er. I felt sorry for him, an' would ha' stopped feightin' if he'd said owt. But he didn't. I'stead, he coom rushin' at me like a mad bull, an' we fowt faster that reaund nor any. We were in th' thick on it when somebry catcht

howd on me bi th' back o' th' neck an' th' top o' th' division o' my breeches an' run me reaund into th' next street. As I were gooin' I seed Joe Benson were carryin' Harry Farnworth, just as if he were a babby, an' he chucked him o'er th' churchyard wo', amung th' gravestones.

"When th' mon as were dreivin' me had had aw th' fun he wanted, he gan me an extra shuv, an I went to th' flure face fust. 'Theighur!' he said, 'stop theer till tha con behave thyself.' Then he walked away. I knowed him; he were a blacksmith, an' his smithy were aside o' th' Temperance Hall.

"I geet up as weel as I could, for my limbs were gettin' stiff an' sore, an' I started cryin'. I couldn't help it, for I were beilin' wi' rage, an' I tried again to put my lip in my meawth, but I couldn't, an' bit it instead, which made me howl. 'That big coward,' I said to mysel, 'to drag me away fro' a job I were just gettin' used to, an' when I were winnin' an' aw! Wait till I grow up, an' I'll show that mon summat!' I leoned agen a wo', an' a chap as were passin, seein' me troubled, axed me what were to do. This browt me to my senses, an' I were shomed, so I towd him th' fust lie as coom to my lips, "I've lost my little brother,' I said. 'Hasta!' he axed; 'well, there's a bobby reaund th' corner wi' a little lad; happen that's him. I'll goo back an' tell him, an' p'raps he'll tak thee an' aw.' An' he turned back, so I slunk off. As I geet to th' eend o' th' street Abram Tacks were bringin' my jacket.

"'Tha's byetten him,' he said; 'two lads has tan him whoam.'



Somebody' sheawted "He's bleedin'."

"I never spoke to that, for I felt just then as if I never wanted to go whoam, or onywhere fro' theer, as I were gettin' stiffer. Heawever, Abram helped me on wi' my jacket, an' stuck to my arm as I walked. On th' road we met Jessie Ormrod an' Joe Benson, walkin' arm-i-arm, an' as they looked at me I could see they were havin' a good lowf. Th' wust on it were as it were Saturday, an' th' teawn were creawded.

"There were to be a big meeting at th' Temperance Hall next day. Professor Crosky and Madame Crosky, th' eminent temperance lecturers, mesmerists, and phrenologists, were advertised all o'er th' teawnship to address a monster meetin' in th' hall, an', mind thee, th' place wouldn't howd two hunderd. Well, I wanted to goo, but my face were in such a mess. When I looked in th' glass my lips an' my face were so swollen till I didn't know mysel', an' my e'en were so little I hardly knowed onybody else. When I coom to put a collar on, it wouldn't goo above hauf road reaund my neck, so I put a muffler on, an' I went to th' meetin'. When I geet near th' hall I were just turnin' th' corner to goo in when I bumped reet agen Harry Farnworth ! I thowt he'd done it o' purpose, an' I were shapin' for another feight, but he said, ' Beg thy pardon, Joe ; I didn't meen it.'

" ' Aw reet,' I towed him ; ' no harm done.'

"Then he axed me to come aside a bit, as he wanted to say summat to me. We went under th' lamp, an' when I looked at his face I should ha' brasted eaut o' lowfin' only *my* face wouldn't crumple, an' it hurt me. He looked like a pace-egger wi' a mask on. Booath his e'en were black, an' one side uv his jaw looked as if he'd had a tacker-up on it aw neet.

“ ‘Doesn’t tha think,’ he axed, ‘we were very foolish last neet for feightin’ for a wench like Jessie Ormrod, when hoo’s made a foo o’ booath on us?’

“ ‘I do,’ I ansert, ‘but I didn’t know then as hoo were after Joe Benson, an’ made use o’ thee an’ me to get him.’

“ ‘Well, we’st ha’ moor sense another time. Let’s be friends again,’ an’ he offered me his hond. I took it, an’ we shook. ‘I’st never forgive Joe Benson,’ he said, ‘for throwin’ me o’er th’ churchyard wo’. When I’m a gradely mon I’ll pounce him to pieces.’

“ ‘Well, I think th’ same o’ Horseshoe Bill,’ I said; ‘he scufted me into th’ next street, an’ then shued me on my face. Look at it. (I wanted to make Harry believe *he* hadn’t speilt my looks, but he had.) If ever I get big enuff I’st goo for that mon for aw I’m wuth.’

“ ‘Well, never mind neaw,’ said Harry, ‘we’re thick again; let’s goo in afore th’ meetin’ starts.’

“ ‘So we went in, an’ th’ reaum were welly full, but we geet a place at th’ front, an’ Harry were on th’ same form as me at th’ t’other end.

“ ‘Madame Crosky were th’ fust to lecture on th’ evils o’ drink, an’ hoo tow’d heaw a friend uv hers, what were a lord, geet so drunken that he didn’t know what he were dooin’; heaw he chucked her ladyship, his wife, into th’ cut, an’ heaw, when hoo geet eaut at t’other side, he had her locked up for tryin’ to dreawn hersel’. Then hoo said th’ same lord, another neet in one uv his drunken sprees, climbed up a lamp-post, an’ unscrewed three brass balls fro’ a pawnshop front, an’ sent his footmon th’ next day wi’ um to th’

pawnbroker, who lant him three shillin' on um ; heaw he'd wasted his brass on drink an' riotous livin', till he'd come so low in th' world that he had to jein th' police force, an' he were a bobby yet. 'That's drink ! Drink !' hoo said, 'an' if it will bring a friend o' mine, a real lord, deaun, heaw much woss will it be for poor folk like you,' an' then hoo set deaun.

"Th' folk didn't seem to like that soart o' talk, but th' speaker bein' a woman, they said nowt.

"Then th' Professor geet up to make a few remarks, but I didn't yer um, for Madame had left th' platform an' come feeshin' for drunkards to tak th' pledge. Th' fust one hoo coom to were me. She bent her yed deaun, an' I thowt I smelt gin fro' her breath, but I weren't so sure o'th' flavour then.

" 'Will you sign the pledge, my man ?' said she ; 'you know drink will bring you to the grave, if you don't alter your course of life. It's terrible to see a man in the prime of life going to a drunkard's doom. Come and sign the pledge.'

" 'I have signed th' pledge once,' I said, 'but I'll sign again if it'll do ony good.'

" 'That's right,' said she, 'I'm glad you've got a resolution. Just sit on the platform. There's a form there for penitents.'

"So I went on th' platform an' signed my name, an' th' Professor clapped his hands.

" 'Number one,' said he ; 'send them up, Madame.'

"One or two moor coom up, an' then Madame geet to Harry Farnworth. After talkin' to him a bit, he were persuaded to come on th' platform. He were lowfin' as weel as his face would let him, an' I made reaum for him at th' side o' me. When th' form were

full, an' they'd aw signed, th' Professor started his discoorse. He spouted for a bit, an' walked up an' deaun th' platform wavin' his honds, an' then he turned reaund an' peinted to us as examples o' what drink does for warkin' folk.

" 'Look at these two men,' he said, peintin' to Harry an' me, ' how distorted their features are. Lock at their bloated faces ; isn't it a warning to you all.'

" 'Somebry sheauted, 'Thoos lads are life tee-totalers.'

" 'Th' Professor looked gloppent. He were let deaun a bit, but he were ready for owt. He stared at us a while, an' then he let off a joke on me. He said he could see I were only a lad, but I favvort a monkey wi' its jowl filled wi' nuts. I durn't know heaw I looked then, wi' everybody staisin', an' Jessie Ormrod an' Joe Benson lowfin' ready to bust, at me, but I felt hot. Then th' Professor said, ' If these lads aren't drunkards, their faythers an' mothers are.'

" 'That's a lie,' sheauted Harry, 'noather my fayther nor mother ever touched ale. An' mind what yo're sayin'.' He were stondin' up then, an' I never seed him or onybody else in such a temper. He stared at th' Professor, who seemed a bit frettened uv a row, an' then walked off th' platform. On th' road eaut o'th' hall Joe Benson geet up fro' his seat aside o' Jessie Ormrod as if he'd stop Harry, so I stood up an' sheauted, ' Let him alone, wilta,' so he didn't bother to touch Harry. If he had I should ha' fowt too, for we'd said if oather him or Horseshoe Bill ever tackled oather on us again we'd 'two' him. Then I walked eaut o'th' hall, an' I never went theer again.

" 'In a while after I begun o gooin' to another tem-

perance reaum in Little Bowton, an' when I geet to know um they axed me to jine th' choir, as I were a good singer. Well, I did, an' as I were abeaut twenty by then, I fixed my ee'n on a bonny lass as I used to sit aside on, named Grace Peacock. We booath seemed to like meetin' on practice neets, an' when th' singin' were o'er hoo didn't object to stop wi' me at th' street corner, wheer we'd talk for hauf-an-hower. One neet I took her a bit o'th' road whoam, an' I axed her slap-bang if hoo were cooartin'.

“ ‘ Well, I am an' I'm not,' hoo ansert, but I thowt by th' road she spoke she'd rayther ha' said, ' Nawe, I'm not.' So I says, ' Well, wilita ha' me ?' ”

“ She eyed me all o'er for a minute, then she spoke sayriously : ‘ Well, there's two chaps in th' road—one's a moulder, an t'other chap dreives his own cab— they'n booath axed me th' same question, an' I've towed um I wouldn't have oather on um, but they winnat tak ' Nawe ' for a answer. If tha con shift um fro' botherin' me ony moor I'll have thee, for I think I should like thee for a husbond.' ”

“ That were enuff. She'd put me on my mettle, an' I went to their heause to ax her parents' consent th' very next neet. When I geet to their door I seed a chap stondin' on th' opposite side o'th' road at th' corner uv a bye street. I felt, fro' th' description Grace had gan me, that he were th' cabman, so I went across to him. He were a bit less nor me. I axed him were he waitin' for sombry.

“ ‘ What's that to do wi' thee ? ' he says.

“ ‘ Oh, I durn't mind what tha'rt hangin' abeaut for at aw,' I towed him, ‘ so as tha'rt not waitin' for Grace Peacock.' ”

“ ‘ Well, I tell thee,’ he says, ‘ as tha seems particular abeaut knowin’—I am waitin’ for Grace Peacock,’ an’ he put hissels, as th’ pappers would say, in a feightin’ attitude.

“ My jacket were off sharp, an’ I went at him ding-dong. I winnat tell thee heaw I banged him abeaut, but he said he’d give in when I were having a bit o’ good practice wi’ him, an’ uv cooarse I had to stop then. Yerrin’ th’ neise Grace an’ her mother coom eaut, an’ seed him on th’ flure, cryin’ for marcy, as one may say.

“ ‘ Durn’t hit him again, Joe,’ hoo said, as soon as hoo knowed who we were. Then hoo turned to him, as he were gettin’ up, an’ sheauted in his face, ‘ Tha’s bin a pest here lung enuff; happen tha’ll keep away for a bit.’ He slinked off then, an’ he bothered her no moor.

“ Grace lifted my jacket, an’ her mother were as preaud on me as if I’d saved a Chinamon fro’ a wattery grave by stickin’ to his pigtail. ‘ Come in th’ heause, an’ wash thy honds,’ hoo says, an’ I went in, an’ th’ owd lady (bless her memory!) gan’ my clooas a good brushin’, while Grace put my necktie straight.

“ That were a extraordinary introduction,” I ventured, just to give Joe time to get some wynt.

“ It were, Anoch; an’ it made things yezzy for me, for when I axed th’ mother for her consent to me walkin her dowter eaut, hoo said, ‘ Aye; tha’rt just th’ lad as I’ve dreomed eaur Grace would have. I’m glad tha con fend for thysel’. I want no milk-sop in eaur family.’ Grace towd me at after as her mother were quite preaud on me, an’ when th’ fayther coom whoam he said wi’ a chuckle, after he’d yerd th’ tale,

' Good lad ; he's th' reet soart ; plenty o' Lanky in him.' An' he tow'd th' mother he'd be very fain to see me.

" That seaunded aw reet, but I'd some trouble to come yet. . . . Arto listenin' ! "

" I am that, Joe,' I says, " it's like th' story uv a tournymment. . . . But th' sun's gradely hot ; it make's one sleepy, doesn't it ? "

" It does, Anoch ; but I'st not be so lung neaw. Well, Grace an' me were comin' fro' th' meetin' one neet, arm-i-arm, when a felly tapped me on th' chest, an' says, ' Here, I want thee.' He were th' moulder, an' I could smell he'd had some drink. So I loased mysel' fro' Grace, an' went aside wi' him.

" ' What didta meeon by leatherin' Dick Button t'other neet,' he said ' a chap less than thysel'.

" I seed I were in for it, but I were owt but feared, so I said, ' What business is it o' thine ? If he were less, tha'rt bigger, an' as tha's hit me on th' breast, tak that,' an' my fist went between his e'en. He staggered, an' as he straitened hissels I were at him again. I didn't give him time to put his neives up. When Grace seed who I were feightin' wi', hoo were raily angry, an' hoo said, ' Give it him, Joe. He's insulted me oft enuff. Stop his impidence for ever.'

" ' I will,' I said, an' I bashed at him again. He made such a poor show, that I were feelin' sorry for him. After knockin' him this road an' then that, I stopped, an' axed him if he'd had enoof, but he couldn't speik, an' then he dropped to th' flure beaut bein' touched. Some men had gathered reaund injoyin' th' scrap, an' one on um helped me wi' him to a durstep. I wiped his face wi' my own honkercher, an' in a bit

he were better. I axed him if he felt aw reet, an' as he looked into my face so sorrowful it hurt me very much. Grace (thowtful wench) went to a milk shop a tothri doors off, an' borrowin' a jug bowt a pint o' milk, an' hoo held it to his lips to sup.

"In a while he coom reaund, an' thanked Grace, an' said he thowt he'd manage hissels. I held eaut my hond to him, an' tow'd him I were sorry, but I'd nowt agen him, an' we'd be friends. He shook it, an' agreed it were his own faut, an' it sarved him reet. 'Good neet,' he said, as we left him, an' then he cawd eaut, 'Stick to him, Grace; he's won thee. That mon ull feight a road for thee aw through this life. Good neet.'"

Joe stopped suddenly, an' as I turned my e'en to his face he were starin' across th' say as if he were peerin' at th' picture after th' battle. One or two boats, stragglers fro' th' Fleetwood fishin' fleet, were lazily makin their way whoam.

"Hasta finished, Joe?" I axed. "It's been like a tale eaut uv a book."

"I've hardly finished yet, Anoch. I were tryin' to picter that feight o'er again. I tow'd thee as Harry Farnworth an' me were fast friends after eaur feight, an' I may as weel tell thee heaw it coom abeaut. When he'd yerd I'd jined another Temperance Hall he cawd at eaur heause one neet, an' said he'd felt lonely sin' we'd left Halliwell Road, an' axed me if I'd tak him wi' me to th' place I went to uv a Sunday. Well, I couldn't refuse, noather did I want to, speshally as he could sing a bit. Grace's younger sister Ellen had jined th' choir just afore then, an' when I introduced Harry I'll be hanged if he didn't make up to Ellen th'

very fust neet he went, an' th' aggravation uv it were he hadn't to feight for her. But I tow'd her he could feight, for I'd had a scrap wi' him when we were younger. Then hoo had him, an' they'n been wed nearly as lung as us, an' he's as good a husbond an' brother-in-law as I know. But, as I started wi' sayin', th' best lasses in thoose days would rayther be fowt for, an' they liked their chaps better after a flare-up o' that soart."

* * * * *

Joe stopped aw at once, an' were pooin' hard at his pipe, as if it owed him summat.

"Well, ger on wi' thy tale," I said.

"It's finished," he ansert.

"Is it? Why, what becoom o' Horseshoe Bill, an' Joe Benson, an' Jessie Ormrod?"

"I didn't think that would interest thee," he said; "I only meant to tell thee abeaut th' feight. . . . Well, Horseshoe Bill deed abeaut two yer after th' outrage had bin done on me. But I durn't think I should ha' bothered to quarrel wi' him, anyheaw, an' he thowt he were doin' me good.

"Joe Benson an' Jessie geet wed, an' though I never bothered my yed abeaut um, I yerd as they'd three childer when me an' Grace were spliced."

"But did tha never see um after they were wed?" I axed.

"Nawe, I durn't think so," Joe ansert. "They were dooin' very weel, an' they were suited to one another; an' when I were fixed up wi' Grace I were satisfied, an' bore um no ill-will."

I thowt that were railly th' last o'th' tale, till Joe, after bein' quiet for a minute or two, took his pipe eaut

uv his meawth, an' blowin' a cleaud o' smook away, brasted eaut lowfin'.

"Neaw as I bethink me," he went on, "I have seen Jessie again, an' it were in such a funny way that I corn't keep my face straight as I caw it to mind. A while after me an' Grace geet wed—I think I've towed thee as Harry Farnworth an' Ellen were glued together at th' same time—we left Bowton an' coom to live at Blackpool. We'n made it a practice to spend to'thri days wi' um at Christmas, an' they return th' visit in th' summer. Well, four yer sin', we were sat smookin' after finishin' th' Christmas goose deaun to th' lucky bo oan, an' th' talk turned back to eaur lad days, an' th' remembrances uv Halliwell Temperance Hall coom on th' carpet. We were very merry o'er it, when I axed Harry if he'd ever seen Joe Benson an' Jessie Ormrod sin' they were wed.

"Oh, aye," he ansert, "I've seen her mony a time. Joe's been deead mony a yer, an' neaw as their family's grown up hoo keeps a shop in Moor Street."

"For a bit o' divilment I said, 'Let's goo an' have a look at her.' I could see as Grace's e'en twinkled to'rt Ellen as I used thoose words, for they were ready for fun when it were to be had. 'Is that th' wench yo' two fowt for when yo' were lads?' Grace wanted to know.

"We towed her it were, an' hoo turned to Ellen, an' said, 'Get thee ready. It's a grand neet; let's see th' dark-eyed beauty as turned eaur husbonds' yeds, an seet their hearts afire.' Th' women put their things on, an' we aw went for a strowl.

"Th' air were crisp an' sharp, an' we went reaund by th' Gilnow to Dean Lone, comin' back by Dobhill.

Abeaut ten minutes walk fro' whoam Harry stopped us at a bacca shop, an' said, 'This is it. Hello! hoo's theer.'

'I looked through th' winder, an' I seed a woman abeaut fifty-six yer owd sarvin' a lad wi' a penn'orth o' fags. 'That's not Jessie Ormrod, is it?' I axed.

" 'It is,' ansert Harry. 'Isn't hoo awterd?'

" 'Hoo has. I shouldn't ha' known her.'

'We were shapin' to goo away, when Grace axed, 'Aren't yo' gooin' to speik to yo'r fust love?' An' I looked at her. Her face were ripplin' wi' smiles, an' so were Ellen's, so, as I seed as they took it so comically, I says, 'Yah, I'll goo in an' buy some cigs.'

'I walked in, an' said, 'Good afternoon. Han yo' ony Black Dug cigarettes?'

" 'Nawe,'" hoo ansert, 'but we'n Red Robins an' Sergeant-Majors.'

" 'Well, gi' me hauf-a-peaund o' Red Robins.'

Hoo lifted a drawer fro' th' back uv her, an' while hoo were findin' th' cigarettes, I looked at her. I never seed such a change in my lifetime. She'd looked to us, o'er thirty yer afore, a rare bonny wench, but neaw she'd no bottom teeth an' she'd a lump at th' top uv her yed as big as a duck's egg. She were th' fattest woman I'd seen for a lung time, an' her neck were level wi' her face. I wondered then wheer my e'en were when I were so young.

"She looked for th' cigarettes up an' deaun, then she coom to me. 'I'm sorry I'm run eaut o' Red Robins, but th' Sergeant Major is very good; will yo' have them?' an' as hoo said this, I seed her starin' at me.

" 'Well, I durn't care much for thoose,' I said; 'but I'll have an ounce on um.'

"As hoo were weighin' um I spoke to her. 'Weren't yo' cawd Jessie Ormrod afore yo' were wed?'

"Hoo looked full at me. 'I were,' she ansert, 'but I'm Mrs. Benson neaw.'

" 'Well,' I axed her 'did yo' remember two lads, named Joe Short an' Harry Farnworth, as went to th' Temperance Hall at th' same time as yo' an' yo'r husbond.'

" 'I do,' she said; 'an' art theau Harry Farnworth?'

" 'Nawe; I'm Joe Short.'

" 'Heaw lung's thy wife been deead?' she axed in a hurry.

" 'Hoo's not deead, I hope,' I says; 'hoo were lookin' through th' window when I coom in; an' so were Harry Farnworth an' his wife!'

" 'Ah, dear,' hoo sighed; 'what a while sin' then. Fotch him in.'

" 'So I cawd Harry in, an' he shook honds wi' her. 'I'm fain to see you booath,' hoo said. 'My husbond's bin deead three yer. See yo', that's my youngest dowter,' as a young woman coom fro' th' kitchen to ax her summat. I felt a shock come o'er me as I looked at th' young woman, for hoo were th' very spit uv her mother in her younger days.

" 'Well, we talked o'er owd times for a minute or two, an' I axed her at last if hoo remembered me an' Harry havin' a pitched battle at side o'th' church when we were lads.

" 'Aye, I remember,' hoo ansert, 'but I never yerd what yo' fowt abeaut.'

" 'Well, I'll tell yo,' I said, 'we fowt for thee, an' noather on us geet thee.'

“ ‘Nawe, yo’ didn’t. Well, it corn’t be helped. I durn’t think yo’d feight for me neaw ; would yo.’

“ ‘Nawe, we shouldn’t,’ Harry blurted eaut, with-eaut thinkin’. I seed Harry had put his fute in it, an’ hoo looked shomed, so I chimed in, ‘ We wed two sisters ; they’re theer at th’ window grinnin’ at us. We’re gradely mated, an’ very weel satisfied wi’ um.’

“ ‘That’s reet,’ said Mrs. Benson, ‘stick to um.’

“ Grace knocked at th’ window for us to come eaut, as they were gettin’ cowl stondin’ theer, so I held eaut my hond. Mrs. Benson took it, an’ said, ‘Caw to see me again, ony time yo’re abeaut, booath on yo’. Good neet ; good neet.’

“ So we left her, an’ aw th’ road whoam Grace an’ Ellen were chaffin abeaut what we’d missed in not weddin’ eaur fust sweetheart. ‘Just fancy,’ said Ellen to Grace, ‘these two honsome men marryin’ such feaw beggars as us when there were such dark-eyed beauties as yond knockin’ abeaut.’ I felt a bit mad, an’ I tow’d Grace hoo owt to be ashamed uv hersel’, lowfin as hoo did, for it were Nature as had awterd Mrs. Benson, an’ hoo didn’t know but what hoo’d have a bob on her yed afore hoo deed. This made um sayrious, an’ they said no moor.”

“Heaw’s Mrs. Benson gettin’ on neaw, Joe?” I axed.

“I’ve never seen her sin’,” he ansert.

It were gettin’ dusk neaw, so we went towards whoam. Grace were stondin’ at th’ dur lookin’ for him when we geet to their street, an’ I waved my hond to her an’ bid Joe “Good neet.”



HARD TIMES!

Remembrances of the Cotton Famine.

I.—The American War.

IT is fifty years ago, this 1911, since the commencement of the American Civil War. Fifty years! It is a long time, certainly, but to one who has lived much over half a century the occurrence of some happening of unusual magnitude during that one's youth leaves its impress upon the memory till the end of life. The history of the American War has been written more than once, and the interest in it has lost its significance for Europeans. Yet there are many people living in Lancashire who do remember the effect it had upon our trade, and those old people will testify, with a saddened sigh, to what working folk endured during Lancashire's tribulation.

No one thought, when the war started, that it would be greatly prolonged; the Northern States, not expecting war, were entirely unprepared for it, and as they were badly beaten in the initial engagements, it seemed much as there would be two Americas, and that very quickly. But President Lincoln took, as

the Persian maxim has it, the bit between his teeth, and, by his untiring energy, not only utilised all the known forces of the loyal States, but created an enthusiasm which resulted in the organisation and equipment of armies large enough in those days to astonish the world.

When the war broke out in 1861 America's fleet was so small as not to be considered seriously as a factor in war, and that was one reason why British folk didn't fear that the war's horrors would be felt over here more severely than hostilities between any two civilised nations must disturb trade in any other country who had had close commercial relations with them.

Our eyes were opened, however, when we read that within a period of eight months after the fall of Fort Sumter the Northern States had doubled the tonnage of her war fleet, and that they had stretched an effective blockading chain across the Southern ports, right from Cape Hatteras to the Rio Grande.

2.—Cotton "Famine" or "Panic."

After then there was a "famine" in cotton, but that was only a name given to the stoppage of importation, for many wise heads among cotton brokers and factors had foreseen—or professed to foresee—a dearth in the raw article, and had bought and stored every pound of cotton they could lay their hands on.

The Lancashire operative, ever alert in matters concerning his work, read with satisfaction of the

accumulation of large stocks of the raw material in our county, and naturally concluded that this abundance meant continued work for him, and his chagrin was intense when he was told that the mill from whence he earned his living would be closed until further notice.

In reply to representations made later, the masters urged that there were tremendous stocks of manufactured cloth on hand, that remunerative prices had not ruled for a long time previously, and that the mills could not be re-opened until those stocks had been depleted. The explanation was mostly true, and, as the war had affected the demand, the over-production was a long time in being materially lessened.

In the meantime events were occurring which developed disastrously for the workers. When the surplus stocks of cloth did begin to move, holders were able to get better prices, not, however, so great as to show a large profit on manufacture and stock, but such as made it more profitable to sell than to hold.

Now came the factory masters' chance. The blockade of the Southern ports was so vigilant and effective that the importation of cotton was stopped, and the masters and brokers held the whole available supply. The temptation to make big fortunes was too great to withstand, and the brokers offered high prices to the masters for re-purchase of the raw cotton they had previously sold them. This caused what Lancashire called the "Cotton Panic," by which name the effects of the Civil War are remembered to-day. The scenes on the Exchanges were bewildering. Brokers, in their frenzy to get hold of the untouched bales of cotton, offered fabulous prices for it. Manufacturers, who had

been wont to use the Exchanges for buying cotton now became the sellers of it, and the brokers who had sold it to them bought it back again. Then it was re-shipped to America—this time to the Northern States—for manufacture. The Americans paid our brokers three times as much as it originally cost from the Southern planters. So, men who had never done a fair day's work in their lives amassed handsome fortunes out of the traffic in a commodity which was necessary for providing us with a means of livelihood, and that at a time when Lancashire was starving! But I have noticed since then that there were men always ready, and quite willing, to wax fat by their country's calamities.

The stoppage of the mills had its effect on other industries which were dependent to a degree on their running. Coal mining, engineering, and machine making were seriously affected, and thousands of workers who followed those occupations for a livelihood were soon in as sad straits as the cotton workers themselves.

Now and again a ship laden with cotton would succeed in "running the blockade," but the prices asked for it were almost prohibitive, and the millowners—those with large hearts—who succeeded in getting hold of it would work it more out of sympathy with their suffering dependents than with regard to profit for themselves. But such relief was spasmodic, and but served to temporarily soften the privation and misery. The whole north of England suffered, but there were degrees of distress in different parts. The towns of Preston, Ashton, Blackburn (Lancashire),

Stockport (Cheshire), and Glossop (Derbyshire), were very hard hit.

3.—Surat Cotton.

Indian cotton, of a very coarse fibre, which had been despised when there was a plenitude of American grown, now came in vogue, but as the demand for it grew, the planters, in their greed for big profits, sent it here so poorly picked that, although special machinery was adapted to its treatment, the bales contained so much pod and green cotton that it often spoiled the machines, and tore the hands of the workers who manipulated it.

As the imported Surat became worse so grew the operatives' dread of working it, until eventually many of them preferred to go hungry rather than have anything to do with the vile stuff. When these were driven to apply for relief to the Guardians, and were taunted with idleness or malingering, they would retort, "Look at my honds!" and they would show them, mutilated, bleeding, or indented with cuts, in proof of their inability to continue working the material.

The pitiful state of distress into which the factory worker was reduced was well pictured in the following poem, by Joseph Ramsbottom, a rhymmer of some distinction in Lancashire forty years ago:—

TH' OPERATIVE'S LAMENT.

Eh, dear! What weary toimes are these,
 When scores o' honest workin' folk
 Reaund th' poor-law office dur one sees,
 Like cadgers, wi' a cadgin poke;

It's bad to see 't, but woss a deecal,
 When one's sel helps to make up th' lot ;
 We'n nowt to do, we daren' stayl,
 Nor con we beighl an empty pot.
 Aw hate this pooin' oakum wark,
 An' breakin' stones for t' get relief ;
 To be a pauper —pity's mark—
 Ull break an honest heart wi' grief.
 We're mixt wi th' stondin' paupers, too,
 Ut winno wark when wark's t' be had,
 A scurvy, fawnin', whinin' crew—
 It's hard to clem, but that's as bad.
 An' for mysel' aw wouldna do 't,
 Aw'd starve until I sunk to th' flure ;
 But th' little childer bring me to 't,
 An would do th' best i'th' lond, I'm sure.
 If folk han childer starvin' theer,
 An' still keep eaut, they're noan so good ;
 Aw've mony a time felt rayther queer,
 But then I knew they must ha' food.
 When wark fell off aw did my best
 To keep mysel' an' fam'ly clear ;
 My wants aw've never forrud pressed,
 For pity is a thing aw fear.
 My little savins soon were done,
 An then aw sowd my twoth'ry things—
 My books an' bookease o' are gone,
 My mother's pieter, too, fund wings.
 A bacco-box wi' two queer lids,
 Sent whoam fro' Indy by Jira Bell,
 My fuschia plants an' pots, my brids,
 An' cages, too, aw'm forced to sell ;
 My fayther's rockin-cheer's gone,
 My mother's corner cubbert too ;
 An' th' eight-days' clock has followed, mon—
 What con a hungry body do ?
 Aw've gan my little garden up,
 Wi' mony a pratty flower an' root,

Aw've sowd my gronny's silver cup,
 Aw've sowd my Uncle Robin's flute ;
 Aw've sowd my tables, sowd my beds,
 My bedstocks, blankets, sheets as weel ;
 Each neet on straw we rest eaur yeds,
 An' we an' God know what we feel.

Aw've sowd until aw've nowt to sell,
 An' heaw we'n clemmed's past o' belief ;
 What next for 't do I couldna tell,
 It were degradin' t' ax relief.
 There were no wark, for th' mill were stopt,
 My childer couldn't dee, yo' known ;
 Aw'm neaw a pauper cose aw've dropt
 To this low state o' breikin' stone.

But wonst aw knew a diff'rent day,
 When every heawr ud comfort bring ;
 Aw earned my bread, aw paid my way,
 Aw wouldna stoop to lord nor king.
 Aw felt my independence then,
 My sad dependence neaw, I know ;
 Aw ne'er shall taste those jeighs again—
 Aw'm sinkin' wi' my weight o' woe.

4.—When Lancashire "Clemmed."

There were, as I mentioned, those who never forgot their duty to the workers who had been instrumental in giving them the opportunity of obtaining wealth. These men, when they couldn't run their mills for lack of cotton, assisted in forming relief societies and emptied fat purses into their coffers. Their wives and daughters found useful occupation in organising and working sewing schools, which made garments for the women and children most in need, and tradesmen gave

of their time and depleted means in managing soup kitchens.

All classes were brought closer together by common suffering. The poorest were kept from actual starvation by voluntary inspectors, who hunted out and immediately relieved those in dire need. Tickets were left with heads of families entitling them to so much soup per head on two days per week, and these tickets were supplemented by other coupons representing value in bread and groceries on the same ratio. Those doles and the times are still remembered in Lancashire as "Th' Dow Days."

As time went on, without prospect of improvement, the drain on public charity began to tell, and the distribution of food had to be curtailed to such limits that there was not sufficient to satisfy the cravings of Nature; little more, indeed, than was necessary to sustain life. The outlook was dark, and the times were hard!

It was pitiable to hear of the efforts, with poor returns, of the more independent workers to help themselves; they resorted to every thinkable means of getting a penny honestly. Sturdy men, whose hands were so torn and blistered by spade work, or working Surat cotton, in return for relief, that they could labour no longer, formed singing groups, and the more clever among them would compose ballads, which they sang in market places and at street corners, and sold copies to any who would buy. I remember a verse of one of these, which I print as a curiosity:—

See a poor mother weeping,
Heart-broken and sad,

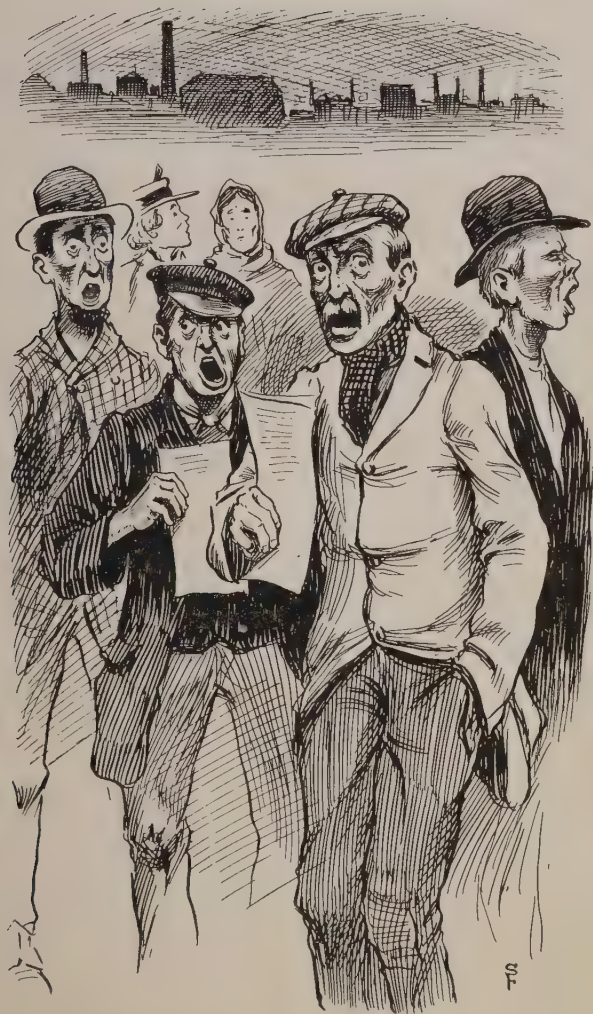
Her garments all threadbare,
Her children half clad.
Save a chair and a table
No furniture there,
And the cupboard, once laden,
Now empty and bare—
For want and starvation
Look in at the door
Of the once happy homes
Of the Lancashire poor.

Such was the condition of the county folk in 1864. Life was a misery to many—but still it was Life, and the veriest poor shrink from the alternative! Lancashire was broken, and the hitherto hearty and industrious worker had nothing in prospect save Hope and Dow!

5.—Some Personal Experiences.

In the remaining pages of this book are some of my own experiences during the Cotton Panic, the names of persons (some of whom are still living) and of places being, for obvious reasons, imaginary :—

Hope-street might have been visited by a plague. One-third of the forty houses of which it was composed was empty, not from any fault in their construction, or that they were in bad repair. There was nothing to complain of in the width or position of the street, for it was typical of those generally occupied by factory workers—long rows of small tenements, two rooms up and two down, with the windows well polished and the footpath flags always scrubbed as clean as hands could make them. But the tenants had had to abandon their homes through lack of work. Some of them had



"They formed singing groups,"

gone to other parts of the town, to live with other families almost as poor as themselves, and, by so doing, being able to economise both rent and fuel. Others had sent their children to friends in distant counties, who generously undertook their care till times mended, and the father would go on tramp, seeking a job by which he might earn a living ; whilst the mother would char, wash clothes, or take domestic service, where it could be got. Where others got a lodgment I cannot say, for sure, but I am sorry to think it was the work-house. Of the remaining two-thirds then occupying Hope-street one half would be out of work or only casually employed.

I lived in Hope-street, the topmost house on one side. It was the smallest house, as, being built at the top, there were four similar ones round the corner, and, having no yard space, we had only two rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom. The rent was 2s. 9d. per week.

I was one of the fortunates, having as much work as enabled me to earn nine shillings a week, certainly no more. I had not long been married, and my wife, as a weaver, had the good luck to work for one of those sympathetic employers who strove hard to keep his sheds running, even if he lost money, rather than let his workpeople starve. But he had to divide his work to enable a greater number to earn a subsistence, so the ordinary four-loom weaver had to be contented with two, and as the cloth woven was not of the best, my wife would be able to earn about as much as myself. We couldn't perform miracles with eighteen shillings a week, but as we had been even worse off, we had learnt frugality, so we managed to save even

a trifle out of that. The sum was small, about ninepence a week, but when we married we had very little indeed to furnish even our small house, and the savings were accumulated until we had sufficient to buy an extra chair or two, or anything we felt we most needed.

We had managed to get together five shillings as the result of a few weeks' savings, and as we had had to use candles for light in the evenings, we decided to have gas. A company owned and controlled the gas lighting in Bolton then (it has for many years past been owned by the Corporation), so we had to lay down a deposit of five shillings before being served. I paid it, and the gas was turned on from the street. When we lighted the jet the glare was so great by comparison with what we had been used to that we were afraid the house would catch fire. I smile when I remember hearing a pair of clogs wander up the street and the wearer would stop under our window, look with amazement at the illumination through the blind, then clomp back again, followed by the sound of another, and yet another, repeating the performance, and when I opened the door there were gathered several of my neighbours anxious to discover what had illumined the street, for there was no light at the top, the only public lamp being at the bottom. During the first night of our using gas we were kept awake very long by a bad smell, which we found emanated from some of the fittings, and I went to the Gas Office to complain of it, thinking, in my innocence of such matters, they would put them right, I was taken down a bit when they told me to call in my plumber to make the fittings tight. "*My plumber!*" I exclaimed; "plumbers are

luxuries, an' I've no brass for owt o' that soart." "Well, then," replied the clerk, "you'd better have your deposit back, and we'll turn the gas off. We'll check the meter to-day, and if you'll call to-morrow we'll return you the balance." I went during my dinner hour the next day, and he returned me 2s. 8d., saying that we had consumed 2s. 4d. worth of gas. I was glad afterwards that we had settled up, for we had only one gas jet in the house, and 1s. 2d. a day for gas was about equal to the amount we could then spend on food.

I may mention an incident in connection with the gas which, though it hurt me very much when it occurred, furnished the best lesson I ever learned, and served as a model rule which I adopted in business, and has been largely responsible for whatever success I have had in life. Young men in those days did not think it derogatory to their dignity to attend a Sunday School. The teacher of our class at the one I attended was a good living man, and his lessons and addresses were much appreciated by us. He was a friend to us all, and we reciprocated his good feelings. Kind-hearted he was, and would often invite us in batches to take tea with him at his house in the week evenings, and so we came to know his wife and family very well. He was a manager at some kind of works, and he also owned an ironmonger's shop, which his wife and daughter tended.

A fortnight after I had drawn what remained of the gas deposit I was going home on the Saturday afternoon. As I passed my teacher's shop, the thought struck me that if I bought an oil lamp it would be much

better than candles, and as I saw some of those commodities in the shop window, I went in and asked Mrs. Brown, my teacher's wife, to show me two or three different patterns, and tell me the prices of them. She arranged several on the counter, and I chose one that I thought would suit us.

"That's two-and-sixpence," she remarked.

"Well, I think that will please my wife, Mrs. Brown, and I'll take it. I'm coming down again after tea, and I'll bring the money then."

"Nay, yo' winnat," she said, and she removed the lamps from the counter. "We durn't trust onybody here."

I remember being very much ashamed then, as I had really intended to bring her the money within two hours. I went home, however, and without waiting to have my tea, got the money, and bought the lamp, more to let her see we had the cash than with the intention of hurrying the purchase.

It was a smart warning which left an impression, for since that day I don't think I have ever asked anyone to give me credit. I have bought everything, be it little or much, with my cash ready, and I soon earned a reputation among the business men I traded with for paying promptly. This system has been very beneficial, by enabling me to buy cheaper and often to laugh at market prices. That experience of mine may be of benefit to some people starting married life; if so, it will have been worth the telling.

6.--How we Lived.

Some of my friends have doubted the statement that we could have lived and worked on seventeen shillings a week, and I have smiled at their doubts. The fact is easily explained, for coarser, but much more wholesome, foods were ordinary diet. Oatmeal porridge was a staple dish ; treacle, now called golden syrup, was kept in large tin jugs, and sold by every grocer at 2d. per lb.; whilst black, or Scotch treacle, was only 1½d. per lb. Every child would have his "butty" covered with treacle, and it had the merit of keeping the bowels right. Margarine and butter substitutes were neither known nor wanted. Tea was dear, but splendid buttermilk could be got for a penny a quart. Again, good Irish bacon cost but 5d. a pound ; whilst good house coals were to be had from the pit mouth by the load at 4½d. per cwt., and the customer, if reliable, was not called upon to pay for his load until he ordered its successor. Added to this, every Lancashire lass over sixteen years old could cook and bake, knit and darn stockings, wash and starch and iron clothes, and do everything required for keeping a house in order, and on entering the cottage of a young married couple there would be seen an antimacasser over every chair back, on the table, and on the sideboard, and each cover had been "crowsherd" by the wife's own hands. I don't know if the Lancashire lasses of to-day have been so well tutored ; one may hope that they make such good housewives. I have shared with five others, a potato pie made by a Lancashire housewife, and we have each had a satisfying meal, the whole of the ingredients of which cost only ninepence.

At the time I have in mind the war was just over. General Grant had compelled General Lee, the Confederate leader, to surrender his army and Richmond, some months before, and although there was some scattered fighting by minor armies, the end was at hand. The hope which had buoyanted the cotton worker through the terrible ordeal was near realisation, but now was "the darkest hour before the dawn," and the suffering was intense.

7.—Our Neighbours.

My home was at 39, Hope-street. Our neighbour at 37, Jim Hitchin, was a moulder. He had been out of work a long time, and their wealth consisted of a large family, they owning five children ranging in years from five to two. Jim was a life teetotaler, and, I understood, a good workman. His mother, who owned a small shop not far away, had helped them as well as she could ; his trade club had done something, and wherever he could find a temporary job within his capacity he was eager to earn a trifle for doing it. But they were poor, and as the children were sometimes short of food it was not to be wondered at that their father should often be dejected and miserable.

Jim's neighbour Tom Cross, at No. 35, was a collier, and was working about two days a week. He had a wife and child. Coal was low in price in those days, and the miner, when in regular work, couldn't be charged with receiving extravagant wages when fully employed. Though the price of coal was low, it was

very scarce in our neighbourhood. I know we had to be very sparing in the use of it, and we and the Cross's used to sit in each other's houses on alternate evenings to save one fire, and Jim Hitchin and his wife would often join us to warm themselves after their children had been put to rest.

We were sitting in Tom Cross's house early one night when Jim Hitchin lifted the door latch and walked in. His face was as pale as one could imagine a man yet alive to wear. Mrs. Cross had been baking—three pounds of flour, and there were several muffin cakes on the clean table. I was going to speak to him, when I saw him look across the table to where Mrs. Cross stood.

“It's come, Emma,” he said.

Mrs. Cross knew what he meant.

“Has it?” she retorted. “What is it, Jim?”

“Another lad,” he answered, and he sank down in a chair beside me, and he rested his elbows on his knees, and with his head in his hands, he cried bitterly.

I have been many times since then a witness of, and on occasion, unfortunately, a participator in, scenes that were grief-laden and distressing, but I shall never forget the agony of that cry. I was too inexperienced to understand the meaning of it, for up to then we had no children of our own, and I thought the advent of a child to bear one's name through life was an occasion for joy rather than sorrow. But I didn't know at that moment there was neither bite nor sup in Jim's cupboard, and that his firegrate was empty.

Jim's trouble cast a damper on what little spirits we

had within us, but the womenfolk grasped the situation at once. There was a little whispering between them, and my wife went home. Mrs. Cross toasted a cake and buttered it, and my wife returned with some tea and sugar in a paper. We had bought a pound of black currants the week previous, and had them preserved for our use on Sundays, as long as they would last, and we did make such luxuries spin out then ! This, however, was requisitioned, and a nice repast was made for the sick woman, which she enjoyed, and for which I know she was thankful. Tom and I went in to see Mrs. Hitchin and the baby when matters were composed. Tom Cross, looking at the firegrate, whispered, "Th' place looks cowl ; let's build um a foire." And we did, giving them a day or two's supply of coals from our scanty stores.

After all the years which have intervened between then and now it is still one of my most pleasurable memories to recall how our wives tended Mrs. Hitchin when they had the time. The self-denial exhibited by the Cross's I couldn't forget, and they so poor ! If ever men prayed devoutly for a change of fortune they were we three of Hope-street. The change in our circumstances still seemed afar off, but it did come.



8.—Jim's Struggle.

Mrs. Hitchin was getting about again, and her baby boy was healthy and strong ; we had lusty "vocal" evidences of the fact, and that was something to be thankful for. We were "camping" in our house

about a fortnight after the "event" just mentioned, when Jim Hitchin joined us. Our conversation turned, as was generally the case, on our day's experiences and an exchange of views as to what prospect there was of an improvement in our circumstances. In a while Jim told us he had been trying to borrow a little money from some friends, but they had been unable to accommodate him.

"I durn't know what to do," he said, "nobry seems to have owt. I yerd to-day as Molyneux's were startin' moulders, an' I went. They promised me a job, but it'll be a month afore they con get ready. Heaw we're gooin' to live for a month on nowt I con not tell."

We all stared at the little bright fire, for no answer was ready. Eventually I remembered the gas deposit, which we made up into over five shillings again, and I remarked, "Jim, I've five shillin'; tha con have that till tha'rt able to pay me back."

A load seemed lifted from him. "Well, I shouldn't know heaw to thank thee if tha would land it me. Tha'st have it back, if I live."

I went upstairs quite cheerily, for poverty had seemed to strengthen our friendship. We kept our savings in a hair trunk, bound with strips of leather and studded with brass nails (a style of box much in use fifty years ago), and scraped the money, nearly all copper, from the bottom. We had five shillings and twopence-halfpenny, and, leaving the twopence-halfpenny to "breed off," I took the five shillings down, and as I placed it in Jim's hand I never heard gratitude more strongly expressed.

9.—Luck at Last.

Now fortune's wheel began to turn in my favour. The week after I lent Jim the five shillings I was offered a job in Manchester at thirty shillings a week—a fabulous sum it appeared to me. Of course I accepted it, and we removed our goods in about three weeks afterwards. The extent of our worldly possessions may be gauged from the cost of removal. The railway company sent a lorry to Hope-street, Bolton, then transferred the goods to a railway truck, conveyed them to Manchester, and delivered them more than two miles from their station, at a cost of 4s. 7d.!

Having been compelled to be frugal when poor it was quite easy to practice economy in our improved circumstances, and we managed to put a few shillings aside every week. In a few years I was able to start business on my own account, and as time rolled on I was fairly successful. I learned that business was often so speculative as to become a gamble, and, although I had lost many pounds in early efforts, and had dismissed from my mind many bad debts, I never forgot that I had once lent a man, when at the bottom of his luck, the only five shillings I had, and that he had promised to pay it back to me, "if he lived." I never doubted his honour, but I remembered his large and increasing family of youngsters, and wondered if ill-fortune still kept him company.

10.—After Twenty Years.

Twenty years after I had left Bolton I was agreeably astonished one day at seeing Tom Cross enter my shop.

I knew him at once, and I persuaded him to stay and have tea with us. He could hardly believe his eyes when I introduced him to my three daughters, fast developing into womanhood, and when my wife came into the room he couldn't restrain his joyous feelings. He took her hand in his strong grip, and shook it so hard, that I had to laughingly ask him to release it.

"Why, bless yo', yo're lookin' younger nor ever," he remarked; "Eh, eaur Emma would be fain to be here just neaw."

"Well, tha should ha' browt her," replied my wife, humouring his mood by dropping into the dialect; "whatever makes thee tak such lung journeys by thyself? Tha'll be gettin lost some day."

"Not as lung as I've such owd chums as yo' for t' tak' care on me. Hoo'll goo off her yed when I tell her I've seen yo' booath."

"Well, sit thee deaun, an' mak thyself a-whoam. I'll soon have some tay ready, an' it'll warm thee up a bit."

Tom did her bidding, and, when he did recover from his surprise and pleasure, we talked of the old dark days of the "cotton panic," and then the conversation lightened up to the changes in fortune that had fallen to the lot of each of us. I asked him if Hope-street still occupied a place on the town's map, and, if it did, was there any change in its appearance since the time we lived there as neighbours.

"Oh, aye," he replied, "th' owd street's still theer. I were through it abeaut two months sin', but everybody were strangers to me. It's as cleon as it were when we used for t' cleon th' flags to stop eaur limbs from growin' stiff an' rusty."

"Well, neaw, Tum," said I, "I want thee to tell me summat abeaut thysel'. Tha sees *I'm* better off nor when we lived at th' side o' thee; an', besides, we'n gotten these three wenches, an' they're a comfort to booath on us.' So, tell me heaw yo'n bin dooin' for th' last twenty yer."

The huge smile left his face, and he looked serious in a moment.

"We'n had aw soarts o' luck sin' then," he replied, "but mooastly good. After yo' left, eaur Emma had another babby—a gradely bonny lad—but when he were abeaut a yer owd he couldn't get through his teethin', an' he deed o' croup. It were a great trouble to us for t' loase him, an' th' wife were two or three yer afore hoo geet o'er it, she took it so much to heart."

"I'm sorry to yer that," I told him, "but we corn't have things eaur own road. If tha goes to th' sayside in th' summer, or to th' country when Nature's in her happiest mood, tha doesn't give a thowt that th' grander th' place is then, wi' th' sky so clear o'eryed, an' th' leaves on th' trees rustlin' abeaut so merrily, when winter comes it gets just as dismal, when th' trees are bare an' th' sky gets grey, an' th' winds are howlin' o'er th' say, an' one connot stond upreet. So it is wi' life, Tum: th' greater pleasures we han mun be followed by doses o' pain, or else we shouldn't know what pleasure were."

"I see," answered Tom, "tha talks just th' same as tha awlus did, an' tak's things as they come. . . . Well, when yo' left Bowton we lost two pals we thowt summat on, an' what made it woss, th' pit stopped at th' time; it were flooded for a month, an' I durn't know to this day heaw eaur Emma managed to keep



"I'm a gronfeyther" he sheuted.

ear sows an' bodies together, for I didn't earn a penny aw th' time."

"One doesn't know what a good woman con do," I remarked, "till they're tried by circumstances. Emma were awlus careful, an' happen she'd saved a bit as tha knowed nowt abeaut."

"Maybe so," he said; "hoo awlus were clever. Well, when th' pit oppend again we started full rig, an' we worked lung heurs. We made up what we'd lost, I think, an' after abeaut three yer I were made under-manager, an' I've had th' job ever sin'."

"An' I reckon tha's ta'n care o' thy brass, so tha'll be weel off neaw, I hope."

"Aye," continued Tum, "we never wasted much, an' after what we'd gone through we were feared o' ever bein' poor again. I bowt a row o' heauses ten yer sin', an' they're cleared fro' debt, an' I'm buildin' two nice uns neaw, an' we're gooin' to live in one eoursels."

"That's th' best news I've yerd for a month," I said; "I've mony an' mony a time talked abeaut yo' to th' wife, an' we'n awlus hoped to yer on yo' again, an' that yo' were doin' weel. But, let me see, yo'd a babby wench when we lived i' Hope-street. Hoo's still livin', I hope."

"Livin'!" he shouted, and his face assumed an even broader grin than I had seen before; "Livin'! Hoo's th' bonniest woman tha ever seed—th' image uv her mother. Hoo's bin married two yer, and what dost think?" he asked, and, without waiting for a reply, shouted, "I'm a gronfayther!" and he chinked with laughter, upsetting some of the tea from the cup he was conveying to his lips.

II.—A Talk of Old Friends.

Tom's merriment set us all in good humour. I laughed at the idea of his being a grandfather, and my family joined in because they couldn't help it—he had infected them all. When he got his emotion under control, he blushed like a maiden! He seemed ashamed of his hilarity, but he needn't have been. A fellow like Tom Cross wouldn't have offended anyone wilfully; true-hearted and guileless, didn't I remember him sharing his fuel to the last scuttle-full with a sick woman who had no fire? Yea, I did, and the memory of that unsolicited but necessary kindness was burned within me!

We had a most pleasant afternoon together, and when he had to leave us I accompanied him to the station. On the way I asked him if he ever heard of Jim Hitchin. (That five shillings I once lent him still rankled in my memory, not for its value, but I remembered his promise to pay the debt, "if he lived.")

"Oh aye," replied Tom, still using the old dialect, "I see him very oft. He's a gentlemon neaw; wears a top hat an' frock cooat. Folk says he'll be th' Mayor in a bit."

"Is that so?" I asked, hardly comprehending the extent of his reply. "I wonder if he's forgotten me!"

"Not he!" remarked Tom, as though such a thing were impossible. "He's axed me mony a time abeaut thee, an' if I knowed wheer tha lived. . . . Let me see; didn't tha once land him five shillin' when we were neighbours in Hope-street?"

"I did," I answered, "an' he promised to pay me back when he could. It's a good bit o'er twenty yer sin' he made that promise, but I've never heard of or abeaut him."

"Well, he has mentioned it to me, an' he axed me to let him know if ever I did yer owt abeaut thee. But I'st goo o' purpose to tell him to-morn, an' he'll be only too glad to get eaut o' thy debt. But I know it's hard wark to catch him, he's such a busy mon."

"I'm glad to yer he's doing so weel. I hope he's not forgotten that he was once poorer than ourselves," I remarked, with a touch of reproach in my voice.

"Sithee!" exclaimed Tom, and he stopped in the pathway to emphasize his remarks by slapping one clenched fist into the palm of his other hand, "he'll never forget that, I'm sure an' certain he wurn't, an' I hope tha'll not think so." I had, for sure, struck a wrong note, and the discord had irritated him, but he went on: "He's one o'th' best men as ever lived, an' folk says he gives brass away faster nor he makes it. I were at an owd folks' doo abeaut two months sin', an' he took th' cheer at th' concert after tay, an' he gan' every one o'th' owd uns as were theer a piece o' silver to tak whoam. Eaur Emma an' me gets invited to their heause sometimes, an' when we goo they tak us in th' drawin'-room—no matter whoa's theer—an' they mak' as much fuss uv us as they do o'th' best. There's not a preaud boogan in their bodies. But tha'll know him soon; I'st be at his wareheause th' fust thing, an' he'll be as fain as a lad in his fust britches to yer abeaut thee again."

We talked of the Hitchin's all the way, and when the train steamed out of the station I was greatly de-

pressed, and felt as though, after finding some long-lost treasure, it had again slipped from my possession, never to be recovered again.

Dear Tom! how time does fly, and what changes there are in this revolving old world!

12.—I Hear from Jim Hitchin.

Tom Cross kept his word. Many a time I have tried to picture his pleased excitement as he hurried that next morning to tell Jim Hitchin of his "find." In the day but one after Tom's call I received a bulky letter written on twelve pages of note paper, and signed "James Hitchin." It was so interesting, and contained such a history of the rise in the writer's fortunes that, did space permit, I would print the whole of it, as I value it now. But details may be summarised so that the reader can understand.

He did not work again as a moulder, but took a job as vanman for a wholesale grocer. Part of his duties was to seek fresh custom when on his delivering rounds, and he added much to his employer's business. Evil days, however, fell on the concern, and from some cause the whole estate had to be sold under the hammer. There was no bid for the whole, so it had to be sold piecemeal. Jim had had his two eldest children at work for a time before this happened, and his thrifty wife had been able to put a little money away week by week. At the sale Jim bid for the horse and van he so long had charge of, and they were knocked down to him.

The person who bought the warehouse and stock (not the goodwill) offered to take Jim into his employ

at a slightly-increased rate of pay, but Jim stood out for a junior partnership, very justly advancing the argument that he had added much to the business. A partnership was denied him, so he made use of the ground as a wholesale grocer, having arranged with another firm to supply him with goods at a fair discount for prompt payment. This was satisfactory, as it left Jim a free business man, with a good remuneration for his labours. He also added other branches to his business, buying direct from the importers.

Misfortune dogged the old firm, for the person who bought the warehouse and stock failed. His selfishness had out-distanced his tact, and he regretted when too late that he had treated Jim's desire for partnership so indifferently. Anyway, the whole went into the auctioneer's hands again. This time Jim's friends among the importers with whom he dealt persuaded him to make a bid for the lot, promising him financial help if he required it. So Jim bought it, and by honourable dealing so increased his business that he quickly repaid his sponsors the sums they had been responsible for.

His children were grown into men and women (they had none since that notable evening I have previously mentioned), and two were married. He told me how he had improved his position in life by being fair in his dealings, and he felt he had nothing to reproach himself with, for he had ever tried to err on the side of charity, remembering that he and his had been at one time very poor.

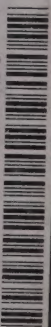
He finished his epistle by reminding me that at the darkest period of his life I had befriended him by the loan of five shillings. The knowledge that it was

still owing had often troubled him, and the only thing that solaced him was that he felt I wasn't in want, and that some day he would hear of me. Mr. Cross had called and told him of us, and he was delighted to hear we were well and doing well. "Thank God for His mercies," he wrote; "I enclose you twelve shillings, being the five shillings I borrowed, and five per cent compound interest for the use of it." His gratitude and good wishes were overwhelming.

Of course I answered his note at once, and returned the seven shillings plus the loan, telling him I didn't require interest for a trifle lent under such circumstances. He sent it again, however, saying it was my due, but if I didn't like to take it myself, I might hear of some person "happen as poor as we once were," and I might give him a lift.

I saw him a while after, and the pleasure of our meeting was enjoyed by each of us.





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